

SATAN



Pl. 1. The second temptation of Christ; the devil urges him to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Grec 510 fo. 165.)

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SATAN

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INTRODUCTION¹

I

SATAN is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. Falsity and violence—these two features are only too tragically typical of the present century. And of these two diabolical manifestations, it is arguable that falsity is the more essentially Satanic. We shall here attempt to show why this is so.

Contemporary man, confronted by the problem of Satan, is divided against himself by a twofold reaction, apparently self-contradictory. He is on the one hand fascinated by this mysterious personage, and on the other hand almost totally sceptical as to his existence and influence on the course of events. His morbid preoccupation with every species of the abnormal and the sensational, his insatiable need for ever more violent stimuli, his restless curiosity regarding the metaphysical and the occult—all these things are further degradations of an already superstitious religiosity. The devil, who is a past master in the bizarre, cannot help but be a source of fascination; besides, he has staged a dazzling come-back in modern literature. At the same time, there is an almost total scepticism as to his actual existence: he is bundled away into the attic of discarded mythologies. Of course nobody believes any more in the pantomime demon king, flashily got up in horns, red tongue and eyes of coal, rather as a confidence trickster in his working clothes; on the contrary, his trappings are in the latest fashion. But his influence has been watered down to a series of dangerous repressions within the personality. Cases of possession are accounted for on purely psychological grounds; the books of Janet—*De l'Angoisse à l'Extase*, for instance—are for many people the final explanation of diabolism in its entirety. Valéry even goes so far as to make his Faust assure the devil that men no longer need his help in order to damn themselves. Let him who can fathom this paradox of the

¹ This introduction is based upon an article published in the diocesan review of Malines, *Collectanea Mechliniensia*, March 1949.

modern consciousness—that the majority of those who will read this book believe no longer in the devil.

What is the situation among Christians? We may speak frankly: whether among the laity, priests or religious, there is to be found a scepticism not far removed from negation. Though one may not question the actual existence of the devil—which would indeed be difficult, since it forms a part of revelation—one entirely fails to put into practice the conclusions to be drawn from it. “The devil exists, of course; but there is a happy medium between saying this and seeing his influence everywhere. We can leave all that side of it to the professional exorcists. For practical purposes—as far as we are concerned—men are only too adept at working out their own damnation.”

No one disputes that genuine cases of possession should be left to the ministrations of those ordained by the Church to that purpose. And it is no less certain that we should be wary of detecting the devil’s influence here, there and everywhere. But to leave matters thus and allow no place in the Christian world-picture for an exact theological assessment of Satan—this can scarcely be called logical. It remains true to say that there are a certain number of central theological problems which assume an entirely different aspect according to whether or no one takes seriously the existence and influence of the devil. Consider, for example, such a problem as the interpretation of history. The whole perspective will change inasmuch as one either gives full weight to the texts concerning anti-Christ and the final struggle of the Church against the devil, or, for all practical purposes, ignores them. Granted, that it is perhaps a little hasty to say with certain theologians, however eminent, “Fundamentally, the problem of evil is the problem of the devil”. For the metaphysical concept of evil viewed as a deficiency of being retains its validity; there is no need to dismiss the abstract aspects of the problem. But does this dispose of the problem of the devil? If, behind the world’s evil, there lies a personality—if, in a sense which we must carefully define, evil is personified—it must be admitted that the point is an important one; and this not only with reference to the non-temporal aspects of theology but also in its pastoral applications: what priest has not had experience of the devil in the conflict which he has undertaken to save this soul or that? There is scarcely a missionary who cannot further document the case

with accounts which give one food for thought. There is something strange in the unavowed rationalism revealed by those who find something amusing in the words of St. Peter on the devil who as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

II

The studies which make up this book fall into two main groups, of which the first deals with the theological Satan. Here the analyses of exegesis, of philosophy, of theology, treat of the devil under his aspect of a personal being whose history—his fall, his desire for vengeance—can be written as such. This is territory which the contemporary reader tends to mark off as the *terra incognita* of a prudent scepticism. The second group embraces the psychological sphere, and its studies, medical, literary and the like, would seem to support the position which holds that the phenomena formerly attributed to the devil may be explained in point of fact in terms of pathological abnormality. It thus remains to make a synthesis of the theological devil, an identified personality, and the psychological devil, whom it is impossible to identify with any degree of certainty. The general impression is one of an essential ambiguity.

Here a series of distinctions should be made. In the first place, while it is quite true to say that the devil has two aspects, it is misleading to suppose that the personal side of his activity should always manifest itself as such, that is to say, as personal. In other words, there is no reason why the devil should appear, speak, reveal his individuality. As Valéry's Faust remarks: as soon as one sees the devil, as soon as one recognises him for what he is—one is no longer afraid of him. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the torment of Ivan lies in his inability to know whether the "little gentleman" whom he sees before him is an objective reality or the projection of the unadmitted elements in his soul. Or again, as C. E. Magny shows in his study of the devil in contemporary literature, Bernanos made in his early novels the mistake of unwarrantably individualising the devil, of locating him with misleading precision in this or that character, this or that place. The achievement of *Monsieur Ouine* lies precisely in its portrayal of the devil as present everywhere and nowhere in particular, present above all in isolation—the loneliness of each inhabitant of the village of Fenouille.

Personal being though he is the devil's trump card is his anonymity: his chef-d'œuvre is the belief that he does not exist. Gide expressed it, in his choice of the opening words of the devil's conversation with him: "Well, why are you scared of me? You know very well that I don't exist."

As against all this, we must remember that the existence of purely psychological elements in the devil's influence will not serve as an argument for his non-existence. Two different dimensions are in question.

A second distinction divides cases of possession properly so-called from the general influence of the devil, though, of course, to many diabolical possession and demoniacal influence are one and the same thing. It is true that Père de Tonquédec, an expert of the front rank in these matters, himself assures us that in the course of twenty years he has never come across a case of pure possession: we learn, moreover, from the study of Canon F. X. Maquart, "Exorcism and Diabolical Manifestation", that it is the Church's policy to combine medical treatment with the process of exorcism in cases of supposed possession. From all this, many will conclude that it is never possible to identify with certainty the influence of the devil.

This would be an unreasonable conclusion. Apart from the fact that where exorcism is concerned the Church exercises a prudential judgment only—is it or is it not prudent to exorcise a given individual?—the rarity of established cases of possession does not prove the rarity of a more general diabolical influence. The devil does not intervene by direct possession only. There is no case of possession in *Monsieur Ouine*; yet who would think of denying the diabolical influence latent in the no-man's-land of hatred and crime which separates the inhabitants of the village one from another? The devil's influence is indubitably more powerful in these its secret and subtle manifestations than in the direct and sensational onslaught of possession, and the discipline of the Church has developed wisely in relation to this fact. Whereas in the sixteenth century exorcisms were performed in public, the ejection of evil spirits being associated with the rejection of heresy,¹ today these ceremonies are carried out in private. We should not therefore conclude that cases of possession do not exist

¹ See the articles "The Sixteenth Century and Satanism", and "The Confessions of Jeanne Fery".

or that they can always be reduced to purely pathological terms. The medical evidence here assembled leaves no doubt on the point. Thus it might seem at first sight that the case of Jeanne Fery, who was probably an impostor, is argument in favour of scepticism regarding diabolical influence, and implies a mistaken judgment on the part of the Church which proceeded to exorcism. Here two important considerations must be borne in mind.

The sanctuary of free will, of the spirit, remains entirely inaccessible to the devil; he can never act directly upon the spiritual faculties of man, but only indirectly by disturbing from outside the sensible equipment (the body, the senses, material objects and so on) used by the soul for the realisation of spiritual activity. Visible possession and all the concrete phenomena associated with the devil are no more than this. By the initiation of these sensible disturbances he aims at producing a sort of vertigo, betrayal of the spiritual into the hands of the material. As M. Bazin's article shows, the arts inspired by the diabolical are characterised by the representation of disorder, of a cosmic chaos. In the face of a material universe which has become meaningless, the human spirit is threatened with the total loss of balance; yet if it does fall it will be as the result of its own choice to do so. Hence the physical disturbances characteristic of cases of possession will often emerge into the recognisably pathological, without giving us thereby any grounds for denying the influence of the devil to them. It is not merely that the mechanisms deranged by him can only be those of normal human psychology (and the same applies, of course, to the workings of grace which reaches us via our normal psychological equipment): illness itself, even when purely pathological, is ground admirably suited to the devil's tactic. Even if he is not the direct cause of sensible disturbance, he can try to turn it to account as an occasion of sin. Thus the war on disease and on disorders of a neuro-psychical variety, even in its purely human aspect, is a contribution, none the less real for its indirectness, to the struggle against the forces of evil in this world. Sickness and death, we would do well to remember, are involved with the entry of sin into the world; and the entry of sin into the world is involved with the malice of Satan. The theology of the point hardly needs stressing. Just as Extreme Unction includes in its proper field the physical amelioration of the patient, in order that he may elicit the supernatural acts essential to this point in his life, yet

does not authorise the neglect of medical attention, so also the medical treatment of those possessed does not preclude in the prudential judgment of the Church the employment of exorcisms and sacramentals.

We should not, however, be too quick to believe in purely pathological causes where possession is concerned. A remark of Père Tonquédec¹ goes to the heart of the matter. For example one of the classical signs of possession is an "intelligent conversation" between the devil and the exorcist via the faculties of the subject. Far from confusing this with cases of thought transference or automatic writing, we should, on the contrary, emphasise the sense of the word "intelligere" employed by the ritual to describe this symptom of possession. There is here more than the purely pathological.

This leads us to the second consideration, which concerns the demoniacs cured by Christ, a subject on which Mgr. Catherinet's article throws much light. Too many people would conclude from the medico-psychiatrical studies on possession that the facts recorded in the Gospels do not support an interpretation of genuine possession; and this is a dangerously superficial approach. We must be wary of allowing scepticism, whether implicit or explicit, to affect our approach to the thaumaturgic acts of Christ; here we are under an obligation to think with precision. First let us note that the Gospels themselves distinguish cases of healing pure and simple from those involving exorcism. Often the material symptoms are identical; yet in the one case we are concerned with the miraculous *curing* of an invalid whereas in the other, as the Gospel itself emphasises, we have to do with *exorcism*, the deliverance of some unfortunate possessed by the devil. Evidently the material symptoms alone are not enough to go on. There must be applied to the case in addition the power to discern spirits—a supernatural diagnosis capable of isolating the diabolical factor which is sometimes so well camouflaged that a purely rationalistic approach would fail to detect it. Christ, possessing the illumination of grace in the supreme degree, was able to track down demonic activity even in such cases as appeared purely pathological. He also understood the fundamental relationship which links sickness with sin (and thus with Satan)—a relationship which we have remarked above. Thus, if it is true that healing the sick

¹ pp. 200-203.

helps to defeat Satan in this world (for he can act only on the matter used by the soul for its own actions), then Christ's miraculous power of healing is in itself a victory over him.

All this leads us to a third fundamental distinction. It is implicitly included in the first two, but should be stated explicitly. To distinguish the personal from the psychological Satan, to distinguish possession in the strict sense from diabolical influence of a more general nature—this leads us to make a careful distinction between the diabolical in its visible, palpable, obvious manifestations and in its invisible aspects—the diabolical such as it emerges, subtle and mysterious, from the theology of sin and redemption.

It seems possible to draw a comparison between the more sensational, "miraculous" phenomena of the diabolical variety and the exterior *mirabilia* of the mystical life, provided, of course, that the analogy is not pushed too far: which would imply a manichean antithesis of God and Satan as on one common plane. Ecstasies, levitations, imaginative visions, often associated with the saints, are never in themselves, materially considered, criteria of the genuinely supernatural. They are rather the effect (not always proportionate) produced by the intensity of a profound spiritual life upon a sensibility which is not able to bear it without disturbance. At the zenith of the mystical life such phenomena often disappear completely, giving place to a life of union with God beyond the senses and the intellect in that dark night of the soul, often a very Calvary in its intensity, which is the celebrated theme of the mystics. These exterior phenomena of sanctity are only of value in so far as they contribute to the spiritual and religious progress of the individual Christian and thus indirectly to that of others. The essential mystical life has its seat at the innermost sanctuary of the soul, that holy of holies concerning which St. Francis de Sales said that it should always remain, humanly speaking, as obscure and dark as that of the Temple in Jerusalem. In the same way the visible phenomena associated with diabolical possession are not in themselves necessarily significant thereof. We have seen above that the devil can act and often does act by way of the sensible *per se*. But whether he does this, directly or indirectly, whether we can or cannot be sure of his intervention, the aim which he pursues always transcends the sensible. His object is to provoke a spiritual self-betrayal in the soul, and this

treachery consists in that very sin of pride, that very willing of deceit, cruelty and hatred, that "supernatural in reverse" which Valéry, Bernanos, Gide and Dostoievski have so well described and which the article of M. Lenz-Medoc tracks down so surely in modern thought from Leibnitz to Nietzsche. This is the final criterion of the diabolical: the sin of the *anima*. Precisely on this point the theological aspect of the problem is thrown into sharp relief by the studies here assembled on Balzac, Milton, Gogol and Dostoievski, and the French Romantics, as also by the article of Dom Aloïs Mager on Satan in our own time. The devil triumphs in the establishing of a society under the sign of "the death of God".

Here two observations may serve to complete our exposition. First, it is not the devil who commits in us this sin of the spirit, this revolt against God, as one who dethrones us from the control of our spiritual faculties; for this he cannot do, as we have seen above. This sin is committed by man, but committed in the image of the sin of Satan: the freedom of man remains in itself totally intact. The devil only gets a purchase on us by way of the sensible; war, disease and disaster in general are apt enough to shake the souls of most men. But the sin of the spirit reveals that there is in man something which relates him to Satan as soon as he gives way to him: it reveals that there is in man a potentiality of revolt, a Satanic element which is nothing other than the possibility, common to angels and incarnate spirits alike, of rebelling against God. The devil triumphs in so far as he actualises this potentiality, subtly revealing to us as in a mirror the complicity which exists between him and us within ourselves. Here again we may recall the scene of Ivan Karamazov's interview with the devil. Ivan cannot make out whether the seedy little gentleman, who is so silly and such a bore, is an objective reality or merely the projection of some murky region of his soul. The mysterious being whom he sees is in fact both together; he is at once the devil in person, and the objectification of the satanic in Ivan's soul. All Satan's power over Ivan, apart from his direct influence on the sensible, lies in that very ambiguity. Suppose an Ivan capable of recognising that he has not deliberately entertained the thought of his father's murder (as indeed Alyosha is later to point out): capable of seeing that the satanic underworld in himself can be freely renounced: and that the devil triumphs only in appearance

by getting him to believe that the responsibility for the crime is not really his own but that of Satan within him. Such an Ivan could speak the "word of power" by which the Curé of Fenouille replies to the insinuations of Monsieur Ouine: "I am not afraid of the devil; I am afraid only of sin"; and he would be saved, ready to advance along the way of redemption. In point of fact, the devil can only triumph in the attempt to deceive men as to the potentialities of his direct influence on their freedom. Thus he can throw the soul into despair, that most terrible of all sins. The ambiguity with which Satan thus enshrouds himself is the determining factor in his whole method of going to work. The doubt which he fosters as to his reality or unreality is the highest card in the hand which he plays against the world.

Our second observation is the corollary of the first. If it is indeed true that the direct action of Satan is effective solely on the field of the purely sensible and that, moreover, this field is and always will be the seed-bed of ambiguity, then it will never be possible to *prove*—in the sense of a geometrical demonstration—that the devil has or has not been at work: only a saint or, of course, our Lord Himself, can discern surely the presence of the diabolical. And this leads us to a major conclusion: that it is futile to hope to put one's finger on the devil, as one would detect a criminal. In neuro-psychical disturbances, as in all the extraordinary phenomena provoked by Satan, there will always be one essential ambiguity: why this is so we have seen above.

Let us follow the point home: to track down the devil for certain, in the rational sense of the word, would be at once to put him out of the game and to present him with the greatest triumph he could desire, for his victory lies equally in provoking an exaggerated belief in his power or a denial of it. Scientific techniques are inadequate when it comes to determining his influence in the field of sensible phenomena: we must have recourse to theological criteria, bearing in mind at the same time the fact that this "theological" influence is non-real in that it is not direct; all of which leads us to the conclusion that the devil's triumph lies in eluding the direct grasp of man. He is ambiguity incarnate; we never know which mask it is that hides him. When we look for him in the sensible, his evasive action is to convince the rationalist in us that the case is purely pathological; when we look for him in the theological aspect of evil, he eludes us either by leading us to

believe that he plays no effective part therein, or that his part is exclusive.

We thus arrive at several principles fundamental to the whole matter. The first, emphasised by M. Magny, is that just as much danger lies in an over-intense belief in the devil as in no belief whatsoever. To attribute to the devil a degree of reality greater than that which he possesses—to imagine him as located here or there, as able to wipe out the spiritual liberty of man, as incarnate thus or thus—this is to fall into a practising manicheism. The devil is the prince of *darkness*, the caricature of God, and can never become incarnate save by an ontological “absence”; he can only act via the man who lets himself be carried in his wake. He can only suggest to man behaviour as a consequence of which evil will appear under the guise of good; man, not God, is his principal enemy and direct objective. His conqueror is the incarnate Christ who overcomes him by overcoming sin. But, on the other hand, it is dangerous not to believe enough in the devil; for to imagine that he does not exist is to do his own work for him. This lapse into a sort of rationalistic optimism entails a blindness to the ceaseless war between the Church and the forces of evil, and a disregard of texts from Scripture on the inevitable apparent victory of the devil (in death) and the impossibility of winning over him in this life a victory that cannot be thrown away; Christians are only too prone to this sort of forgetfulness. They lull themselves with the optimistic dream of reconciled irreconcilables and imagine that the future of the Church lies in the increasingly *visible* manifestation in this world of Christ’s victory over the devil.

The second fundamental principle is the impossibility of Satan’s influencing us directly. The sin against the Holy Ghost is committed by us in imitation of the sin of Satan. Hence the best tactic where Satan is concerned is to bear in mind always this essential truth: even if he were to deploy against us the entire array of sensible *mirabilia*, he would still remain powerless so long as our free will remained unsundered, however vast the areas of the personality overrun. If we realise this fully, while remembering that the devil *does* exist and *does* act, we shall no longer fear him and we shall no longer see him behind every bush.

This second principle demands completion by a third; that of the victory already won by Christ over the devil. Indeed, as we have said, it is to be expected that the Church should share in all

the aspects of Christ's life on earth—thus both persecution and the apparent finality of death—not excluding an apparent defeat at the hands of Satan, as that of Christ on the cross. But, fundamentally speaking, the condition of the Christian soul is one of triumph; triumph in and through tribulation, if you will, yet triumph in Christ, nevertheless. And we should add, moreover, that the growth of the Church in this world is the measure of the growth of the devil's hatred; so that his onslaught (always indirect, be it remembered) should, far from troubling the Christian, serve him rather as a sign of the secret growth of our Lord's Mystical Body: the proof of the victory of Christ and the Church. There is surely no better text to quote in conclusion than the words of Jesus Himself: "Take courage, I have overcome the world."

CHARLES MOELLER

PART I

SATAN'S EXISTENCE AND NATURE

THE DEVIL HIMSELF

LUCIFER, the bearer of light become the prince of darkness, has earned his name of Satan, "the adversary". He is the enemy of God, of man, of all that is good. It is no part of wisdom to underestimate an enemy. It is stupidity to cultivate an ignorance of the enemy to the point of blindness to his existence; for in such blindness it is impossible to face an enemy, let alone hold him at bay or conquer him. This is to invite defeat, to welcome slavery, to yield supinely to a conquest that in this case is radical, irrevocable, eternal.

Under pain of such fatal underestimation of the devil, we must know something of his angelic splendour, of the intensity of his malice, and of the agony of his punishment. Yet it will be difficult to see any of these things unless the splendour of Satan is seen silhouetted against the sun of the perfection of God, and in constant contrast with the limited capacities of man. In this light, one can see something of the angelic splendour (dwarfed though it is by the infinitude of divinity), and nearly all of the hatred, destructiveness and wickedness which feeds on despair. In a world that is uncertain of God and ignorant of man, the Enemy of all that is good is perfectly disguised, safe from counter-attack; he is unknown. Men's terror of Satan throughout the ages has had solid basis in the devil's angelic powers and the malice of his will; that malignancy of the evil one is not shackled by ignorance, rather its full fury is unleashed on the world.

This chapter, then, is by way of a reconnaissance report on the Enemy who challenges so bitterly our every step towards perfection. What is he like, what are his resources, what are the foundations of his bitter opposition, what is his morale, what are the chances of his collapse before our defence or our attack?

It is of faith that Satan is a fallen angel.¹ That definitive

¹ Fourth Lateran Council (cap. 1, "Firmiter"): ". . . qui (Deus) sua omnipotenti virtute simul ab initio temporis utramque de nihilo condidit creaturam, spiritualem et corporalem, angelicam videlicet et mundanam: ac deinde humanam, quasi communem ex spiritu et corpore constitutam. Diabolus enim et alii daemones a Deo quidem natura creati sunt boni, sed ipsi per se facti sunt mali" (DENZINGER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, n. 428).

description contains all the essential truth about him; fully analysed, it tells nearly the whole of the frightening story of the Enemy. As an angel, Satan is pure spirit, much closer to God than man.¹ The spiritual is not something foreign to us. We see it breaking through the material veil of men's bodies, its lustre making the difference between a vibrantly living man and an inert mass of decaying flesh. By his spiritual soul a man lives, breathes, reaches out to horizons that far outstrip the world of the animals; by it he is established as completely different from every other creature. Here, in Satan, there is no veil to hide the splendour of the spiritual, to limit or threaten its life-giving power, to cut down its horizons; here is a life-principle unfettered, a pure form flowing out into activity without hindrance or dependence. God Himself is a pure spirit, but the uncreated pure Spirit of limitless perfection; all that we know in this world, indeed all there is of life, of beauty, of goodness, are imaged shatterings of that majestic perfection. Of all these created fragments, the angel is the most sublime, the most nearly complete replica of the inimitable Source of them all.²

Perhaps one of the most startling characteristics of the devil, to us who savour drops of time so thirstily, is his agelessness. It staggers us to see him as young now as when the world was born, with all the undiminished energy and dynamic vigour of full, young maturity. Yet the fact is plain enough: a spirit doesn't grow up any more than it grows down; there is no way in which an angel can age, no moment in which it does not possess the full strength of its angelic life. From the very first instant of his existence down through the whole length of eternity the devil lacks nothing of his angelic perfection. He has watched the world grow old and the generations of men and women pass in unending procession from birth to death; when the last of that long file has passed and the sun has set for the last time, Satan will still be young.

By his angelic nature, the devil enjoys the independence distinctively characteristic of a pure spirit. For ourselves, we glory in the freedom that stands out in a physical world as brightly as a fire in the darkness of night; yet it is only in the inviolable

¹ This is abundantly clear from Holy Scripture narrating angelic actions which demand this inference as to their nature, and explicitly describing angels as spiritual, intellectual substances superior to man. Cf. E. HUGON, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, vol. i, pp. 572-4.

² Ibid.

choices of our will that we approach the angelic mastery. Satan's life is independent of food, air, sleep, or any other thing ministered by the world beneath him. In God there is independence in knowledge which is omniscience, in power which is omnipotence, in life which is eternal, self-sufficient being. In the angel's pure spirit that independence is complete relative to everything but God Himself: its life can come from no other but God, for a spirit is not born but created; in regard to the material universe, it is completely independent, the master, in no sense the subject or servant, and a master that has no need for even the humblest ministrations of the material.

Among the vivid consequences of this angelic independence of the devil is his immunity to injury, to pain, to sickness, to death; indeed, he is even immune to the human discomfort of being crowded! Like God, and unlike man, he has no body. There are in him, then, no parts to be dismembered, no possibilities of corruption and decay, no threat of a separation of parts that will result in death. He is incorruptible, immune to the vagaries, the pains, the limitations of the flesh, immortal. Only God, by His almighty power, could destroy Satan, recalling the borrowed existence by which the devil lives; and this God will not do.¹

There are no geographical difficulties in the way of the devil's activity. Since all reality depends every instant on the divine support by which it exists, God is wherever there is reality, He is everywhere; for God is where He works. The devil, a created spirit, is in place in the same way: the angel is where it works.² Unless this particular task exhausts the power of the angel, several material places can be the focus of angelic operations and together make up one place for the angel; the fact that he is busy in New York is no hindrance to his bustling in Moscow. His movement from material place to material place is accomplished with no more effort, and in no more time than it takes to shift the mind from one subject to another. The speed of light is a snail's pace

¹ The conclusions stated in this and the preceding paragraphs follow immediately from the purely spiritual nature of the angels. Their purely spiritual nature is made clear in Holy Scripture where they are called spirits (Eph. vi. 12), opposed to flesh and blood (Luke xxiv. 39), described as living a life and performing works impossible to a material being (Tob. xii. 19; Matt. xviii. 10). This interpretation is universal among the Greek Fathers from the fourth century on; among the Latins, Augustine would still consider the matter doubtful, a doubt that persisted as late as Peter Lombard.

² ST. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 12, q. 52.

compared to the speed of angelic movement; nothing in the world can escape the devil by flight.¹

An interesting difficulty presents itself here from the pages of Holy Scripture itself. Angels have no bodies, yet they have appeared to men in physical form, have talked with them, journeyed the roads with them fulfilling all the pleasant tasks of companionship. But after all, if they are independent of all save God, masters of all beneath them, the angels can assume, and have assumed, the appearance of bodies; but they have not, as the souls of men do, become the life principle of these assumed "bodies". They have not, in other words, denied or cast off the purely spiritual character of their natures.² These apparent bodies of the angels could not act vitally: even under the guise of a physical form, the angel could not eat, digest, see, or hear, generate children. These "bodies" were tools of the angels, not a living part of them. The angel's mastery over the physical world is not at all to be compared to God's sovereignty. The angel's is a ministerial mastery, not a creative one; they can put to use the powers and principles implanted in nature by God, they cannot call those powers or principles into being.³

We see the devil, then, because of his angelic nature as a pure spirit, ageless, independent, immaterial, a life principle complete in itself, a pure form integrally whole in itself. He is dependent on God and independent of all things else: mirroring the divine resplendence in all its purity, the created pure spirit reflecting the incandescent beauty of the uncreated pure spirit Who is God.

The perfection of angelic nature, the angel's proximity to God and superiority to man, finds its full clear statement in the sublimity of angelic action. Ordinarily we think of angelic action in terms of what the angels have been known to do in the material world and to the men who inhabit it; for that after all is our world, the world we know at first hand. Thus, we recall the avenging angel striking down the first-born of Egypt, giving the devastating answer to a profanation of the temple, going before the armies of Israel to strike terror to the heart of the enemy; or

¹ St. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 12, q. 53.

² Ibid., q. 51. The fact of the assumption of bodies is stated again and again in Holy Scripture; the non-living character of these bodies seems clear from the archangel Raphael's words to Tobias (Tob. xii. 19).

³ Ibid., q. 114, art. 4 et ad 2 um.

the tales of magic rites and diabolic wonders that ooze out of the dark depths of the history of devil-worshippers. Actually, all this activity is no more than froth on the surface of an angel's life. As in the uncreated pure Spirit the eternally intense activity is immanent subsistent Knowing and Loving which makes up the Trinity of the Godhead, so in the created pure spirits the unceasing dynamism of life is an entirely immanent thing made up of knowing and willing whose intensity is undiminished by time, not delayed by the necessity of a multitude of vegetative and sensitive activities as in men: an intense activity that is a stranger to fatigue.¹

For ourselves, we gather the crumbs of truth like beggars trying to reassemble a loaf of bread from discarded fragments. Our minds wander the world sniffing like bloodhounds at the traces of First Truth which make up the world of things about us, often enough losing the trail or dashing off on false trails. We know God through His reflections in things; indeed, we come to a knowledge of our own soul only through observing the activity of that soul in our actions. What we know, all that we know naturally, comes to us from a scrutiny of things beneath us or around us. God's knowledge is immediate and utterly independent; knowing Himself, He knows all things for He is the cause of them all. His knowledge is not from below nor from above, but from within Himself. The angel, mirroring that immediacy and independence, has its knowledge, all of it, from the first instant of its life; not from a scrutiny of other things, but directly from the source both of truth and of things. The angel's knowledge is by infused concepts, had entirely from above, from God Himself; in fact, the greater the perfection the angel, the fewer, more universal are the concepts by which it knows all natural things. In its knowledge of itself, the angel perfectly images the divine, for it knows itself not by reflection as we do, not by infused concepts as it knows all else, but by immediate presence of its spiritual self to its perfectly proportioned intellect.

The angel's knowledge is, then, perfect, for it comes from God. It is immediate, since there is no need to gather it bit by bit through a search of the world. The angel has no need of the delay and labour of study; there is in it no room for error; there

¹ This is the more common doctrine which limits the faculties of the angels to two, namely, intellect and will; as against those who follow Suarez in arguing for a special spiritual faculty, distinct from intellect and will, by which the angels move bodies.

is not even the possibility of the obscurity with which passion so often clouds our knowing. There is no need in the angel for the caution so essential to ourselves as we pick our precariously slippery way down from the heights of principle to the levels of conclusions, or for the labour that alone will bring us to the heights of principles from the level of observed facts; for an angel knows, not by reasoning, but intuitively, plunging the sharp point of its intellect into the heart of a principle by one swift stroke that lays bare every trace of truth contained in it.

In view of that faultless angelic knowledge, we would expect a roaring fire of love in the angels; for it is the mind that furnishes fuel for love's fire, though in us often enough we neglect to put the fuel on the fire. Even at its best our love is a disappointing thing and in the depths of our heart we are bitterly aware of it. The ignorance that blinds us to evil opens the way for the disillusionment and death of love; the momentary enticement of some new, bright thing makes fickleness a perpetual threat. Our love finds the path for its footsteps more by faith's obscurity than by the light of vision; reasonably we go to love's surrender with hesitant steps, slowly, almost fearfully, afraid to give too much or too quickly yet remorseful that we can give so little. Not so the angels. Following that perfect knowledge of theirs, the angel's surrender to love is immediate, unwavering, utterly whole and completely irrevocable. The fire of an angel's love is not built up slowly; it has no stages of mere smouldering, nor agonising moments of dying embers; rather the angel is immediately a holocaust, a roaring conflagration, aflame with a love that will never lessen.¹

All this is true of the very least of the angels. With no more than this before our eyes, we are like a man breathless at the majestic lines of a cathedral seen through a haze for we have seen only the blurred outline of Satan's angelic magnificence. For a fuller appreciation of the radiant perfection of our Enemy, we must keep well in mind the serried ranks of graduated perfection that make up the hierarchy of angelic choirs.²

¹ This exposition of the knowledge and love of the angels is the common teaching following ST. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, qq. 55, 58, 60.

² There have been no definitions of the Church relative to the number or nature of the angelic choirs. The names themselves are to be found in the Scriptures, their use and order is sanctioned by the liturgy, while tradition has solidly approved the angelic hierarchy. Cf. HUGON, op. cit., pp. 726 ff.

This is a stupendous truth consequent on the purely spiritual nature of the angels. If you were to walk down a street in Chicago or New York and every one you met were to give back a reflection of divinity as startlingly different as we see now between roses and elephants or worms and men, you would have achieved some little insight into the world of the angels. Multiply this by the millions of citizens in Chicago and New York and you would be walking through a world staggering in its variety, its beauty, its perfection; where the mind and heart would find no such breathing space as is offered by the sameness of men. There would be no need for sharp alertness and sympathy to catch the beauty of individual differences; rather the heart and mind would be reeling under these differences that would be pounding at us every moment and from every side.

The angels, as pure spirits, have no bodies. There is, then, no question of generation among the angels, of angelic families or relatives. Each stands apart as a direct creation of God; and, as a pure spirit, specifically complete as an individual. In plainer language, one angel possesses more perfections than the one immediately beneath him by a step higher than that which separates a man from a dog. Each angel is a pure form; any differentiation in that form means a differentiation in species. Among ourselves, there is no such specific differentiation; we are all members of the one human species, differing as individuals by physical, moral or intellectual perfections that still leave us substantially, specifically the same as all other men. If a difference could be introduced into the substance of the soul of man, which is the human form, then the result would not be a man but something substantially different from all members of the human species.¹

This is true of the lowest choir of angels; that choir consists of multitudes of pure spirits, each possessing more perfections than the next, in that substantial way. This, however, is only the lowest rung of the angelic hierarchy. To complete that first hierarchy, it would be necessary to mount through the more numerous multitudes² of the Archangels, and go on to the even greater multitudes of

¹ This is the common opinion of Thomists and many other scholastics. *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, q. 50, art. 4.

² That the number of angels is exceedingly great can be seen from Holy Scripture (Job xxv. 3; Dan. vii. 10; Luke ii. 13-14; Apoc. v. 11). There have been numerous estimates by Fathers and Doctors, all of whom agree on the greatness of the numbers of the angels. St. Thomas thought that the angels incomparably exceeded in numbers all material substances (*Summa Theologica*, loc. cit., art. 3).

the Principalities, each individual spirit, you understand, specifically more brilliant in perfection than the next. There would still be the second hierarchy consisting, in the ascending order, of Powers, Virtues, Dominations; and, towering above that, the third and supreme hierarchy of Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim.¹ These last, the Seraphim, are then the most perfect creatures God has made, their very name indicating something of the burning ardour, the sharp brightness, and clear consuming flame of a love that matches the most perfect mirroring of divine knowledge in creation. Of this countless host of the Seraphim, each specifically, substantially higher in perfection than the next, Lucifer was the highest; the "morning star", the "bearer of light", holding his rightful place at the very peak of created perfection.²

It is almost beyond our powers of comparison to balance one against the other the highest of the Seraphim with the lowest of the angels. Yet we must do more than this, we must see in contrast the highest of the Seraphim and our own feeble selves if we are to see something of the battle in which we are engaged. Satan was the highest of the Seraphim. He lost his title to that name of love by his fall, but he lost nothing of his natural supremacy of that multitude in the highest choir of the highest hierarchy of the angels. Seeing beneath him all the rest of that innumerable choir, and on down through the other eight choirs flashing back at divinity the infinite facets of its sublime mirroring, we see something of the Enemy we face throughout our lives.

Even this breathless height of perfection does not tell us from what heights Satan fell; it tells us only the perfection he carried with him into darkness. For a fuller appreciation of the venom of this Enemy, we must remember that these natural heights of perfection were only foothills of the perfection which the generosity of God called into being for the angels. Satan, like all the other angels, was created in grace, i.e. from the first moment of life, he was lifted to the supernatural plane.³ His natural life was divinely perfected by the participated divine life which we call

¹ See footnote 2 on p. 8.

² The more common opinion, tracing back to Tertullian and Gregory the Great (*Summa Theologica*, loc. cit., q. 63, art. 7).

³ It is of faith that sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation, and any works efficacious for salvation. Second Council of Orange, can. 5-7 (DENZINGER, op. cit., nn. 178-80); Council of Trent, sess. vi, can. 1, 2, 32 (DENZINGER, op. cit., 809, 811, 812, 842). That such grace was given the angels at their creation is the common theological opinion.

sanctifying grace; the wide horizons of his angelic mind were opened to the horizons of divinity by the supernatural habit of Faith, letting him see through the eyes of God; his will was divinised by a charity and hope that would enable him to love God in a divine fashion and to stretch forth in eager confidence of divine help to goals that are possible only to God. St. Thomas¹ maintains that these supernatural gifts, necessary to every intelligent creature who would come home to God, were given to the angels in exact proportion to their natural gifts; in other words, the highest of the angels was, then, given the greatest perfection of charity, of faith, of hope, the most abundant share in the divine life of grace. Here was the mountain top of perfection, natural and supernatural, from which Lucifer plunged to his eternal doom by an act of his own free will.

Something of the terrifying powers of our Enemy is apparent from his natural perfection. We must grasp something of the tragedy that saw the light of such faith extinguished, and utter blackness descend to hide for ever the secrets of God; that turned the flame of that charity into the ashes of hate; that closed for ever the gates of hope and opened the flood-gates of despair; for only then can we begin to suspect the consuming rancour that hurls those diabolic powers against all that is good, and with no surcease.

The dazzling quality of angelic perfection would seem to preclude the very thought of sin. Yet the ennobling fact is that heaven is not only given; it is also earned. Lucifer was created in sanctifying grace to crown his natural perfection; he was, that is, fully equipped to win the prize of heaven, but he still had to win it.² Because he could win, he could also lose. Like our own, his freedom was reverently respected by the action of God; and, like ourselves, if he were to have heaven he would have to merit it by the goodness of a free act, by his own free choice. Because the gates of heaven were thrown open to his efforts it became possible for him to go to hell. In this supreme test, the devil did not win heaven but lost it; or rather, he freely and deliberately turned his back on it. He was the first; all others who joined his hordes, whether from among the angels or from among men, were volunteers, haunting the halls of hell only because they so chose.

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, q. 52, art. 6.

² *Ibid.*, arts. 1-4.

Yet that tragic choice of Lucifer does seem to present serious difficulties. Lucifer's free choice could not have been deflected by any preceding ignorance or error either in his natural knowledge (which was perfect from the first instant) or in the supernatural knowledge he had by infused faith, a gift greater in him than in any other angel and a perfect gift since it came directly from God. In him there could have been no rush of passion such as blinds men to the path to happiness, for passion is a movement of sense appetite, a thing impossible to a purely spiritual creature. Moreover his will could entertain no least desire for evil since there was no disorder in the will and no mistaken judgment of the intellect to mislead it. How then did Lucifer commit sin?

The difficulty mounts when we remember the intense degree of sanctifying grace by which Lucifer lived a supernatural life, the superb perfection of his infused faith, hope, and charity. Actually, the difficulty can seem insurmountable only if we forget the sovereign will that God has given to angels and men; if we forget that regardless of the stupidity of sin, regardless of the perfection of intellect and will, angel or man can be evil if he so chooses. The question then is not so much how could an angel, particularly the highest of the angels, commit sin; rather it is, in the name of our curiosity, what was the sin of the angels and what was the process of that sin's commission?

. For ourselves, we know that there are seven avenues of invasion open to sin attacking the soul of a man, the avenues which we name when we list the seven capital sins. It is immediately obvious that we must strike five of those out of our consideration when we investigate the angelic sin. Only the purely spiritual sins of pride and envy were possibilities to creatures who had no bodies, who had no use for money, no susceptibility to injury, no tendency to fatigue. Since envy demands pride as an absolute prerequisite, it becomes clear that the sin of the angels would have to have been pride.

This conclusion is today the common theological opinion. Among the early Fathers, chiefly because of the assumed authority of the Book of Enoch, it was thought that perhaps the lower angels sinned by lust for the women of the world; yet even restricted to lower angels, the opinion chafed for it was obviously difficult to find a place for lust in a bodiless spirit. By the time of Origen the apocryphal character of the Book of Enoch was clear, and the

flat conclusion to the impossibility of lust in the angels was explicitly stated.¹ Envy as the angelic sin has had its champions, and with an apparent reasonableness. Lucifer might have been envious of the future exaltation of human nature by its union to the Son of God in the Incarnation; or of the future exaltation of men to angelic, nay to divine heights by sanctifying grace and the promise of heaven. But there the possibilities are exhausted; and it still remains true that pride must precede envy. There was nothing else for Lucifer to be envious of. He was the highest of created beings, there was nothing above him but God Himself and he could not be envious of God; for, as St. Thomas says, only a fool can be envious of what is so far above him as to be impossible of attainment. Lucifer was no fool. When it is said that he desired to become like God this must not be understood in the sense of a desire to attain divine nature or to dethrone God; but rather to be, in his own order, as God is in the divine order. As we shall see, that comes down to a desire for self-sufficiency that is not possible to creatures.²

On the score of pride, surely Lucifer had more reason than any other creature; and his example, plus their own spotless perfection, would give plausible reasons for pride to other angels. Still, that pride had to find its way into the angelic world with none of the preparatory work of ignorance, error or passion. How did it happen? If we take a sinful act in its most obvious sense of a disordered act, it is clear that the disorder is immediately introduced by a choice of something evil, that is, by embracing a thing like incest or murder which is disordered in its very nature. It is not less clear that such a thing could not be done by an angel; we might mistake such a thing as good, or as having so much good about it as to be worth preferring to the divine, or, quite simply, because of the disorder already present in our own desires from the sinful heritage Adam has left us. There was none of this in the angels. With our long familiarity with sin, it is not hard for us to see another possible source of sin's disorder: perhaps

¹ Confer *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. iv, "Démon d'après les Pères", cols. 339-49.

² Scotus and Suarez disagree with St. Thomas on the precise nature of this sin of pride. To Scotus, the sin was not so much a desire for excellence as a disordered love of self pushed to the point of hatred of God: and hence should be called a kind of spiritual lust rather than pride. Suarez considered Satan's sin as properly one of pride, but would have it consist in a disordered desire for a hypostatic union between the Word of God and his own angelic nature.

we do not choose evil in this particular sin, but we choose a good badly. Take, for example, the matter of human love. Certainly there can be no question of its inherent goodness; but suppose we choose it evilly, suppose a husband does literally adore his wife, give her the worship, service, and preference that belong to God alone, suppose in actual fact his love does not go beyond his wife to the God Who made her and in Whom alone the marital love can stand—is there any question of the evil of this idolatry? Yet the husband has not chosen evil; he has chosen good evilly.

It is in this way that St. Thomas¹ analyses the sin of Lucifer and his angelic followers. Caught by the undeniable beauty, perfection, goodness of his own angelic nature fully comprehended, Lucifer loved it; that was as it should be. But his love refused to budge a step beyond this, refused to look beyond the angelic perfection to its divine source; he insisted upon resting in that beauty to find there the fullness of happiness, to be sufficient unto himself. As is the way of pride, Lucifer isolated himself, even from God. The sin, then, is to be found in his wilful ignoring of the further order of his own perfection to divinity; ignorance in the sense of lack of consideration was in the sin, surely, but *in* not preceding it, a part and parcel of the free choice that sent the angelic hosts into hell. Lucifer's sin consisted in loving himself (as pride insists) to the exclusion of all else; and this with no excuse: without ignorance, without error, without passion, without previous disorder in his angelic will. His was a sin of pure malice.

Because of his exalted perfection an angel who sins falls far; because of the perfection of the angelic will, the angel who falls, falls but once. His love, you will remember, is not the faltering, hesitant, fickle thing that ours is; his choice is final, his embrace eternal, nothing further enters into his consideration to bring about repentance. The instant that irrevocable choice of pride was made, Satan entered into his eternal punishment, stripped in an instant of the supernatural life of grace, of the light of faith, of the loving union of charity, of the horizons of hope; cast out into the exterior darkness, and for ever.²

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, q. 63, art. 1 et ad 4 um.

² Both Scotus and Suarez agree that none of the fallen angels repented; but both are of the opinion, contrary to St. Thomas, that repentance was a possibility to them and the time was given for it. Both agree that during that interval Satan and his followers committed other sins.

The essential punishment of Satan, as for the damned of the human race, is called by theologians the pain of loss. This means that the damned have lost for all time the goal for which they were created, the end which would have brought them eternal happiness; that they have failed beyond recovery, that there is no tomorrow with any less of despairing emptiness than today has held. They have lost God. We can understand a little of this hopeless emptiness from the crashing impact that destroys the lives of men who have chosen false goals; we must look to the false goals for only these are irrevocably lost while man yet lives. To a man who has made health the goal of his living, an incurable disease destroys life's meaning and he pleads for extinction; the greedy to whom money is God, plunge to their deaths after a market-crash; the pleasure-seekers cannot face old age, and so on. In the case of Satan, the loss was irrevocable, and it was a loss of the true end for which all his splendid gifts were created; moreover, he knows sharply and clearly that nothing else can ever bring happiness, that it was this for which he was made, for which he was equipped, it was this that gave all meaning to every moment of his existence. It is lost; hopelessly, eternally lost. His despair measures up to the perfect insight of his great intellect; darkness is necessarily the colour of his days, bitter, self-despising darkness that strikes out at all light yet despises itself in the very striking; for this was not the fault of any other but himself.

Paralleling the pain of loss which is the answer to sin's choice, there is the pain of sense proportioned to the disordered indulgence of self-will. That pain of sense is inflicted on the damned by the fire of hell.¹ It is, of course, utterly impossible to burn a pure spirit, or to inflict an injury upon a bodiless creature; yet so material a thing as real fire can be an instrument of divine justice even against the fallen angels, as so material a thing as water can be an instrument of divine mercy to the spiritual souls of men. In each case the instrument is acting above itself to produce the effects of the divine agent using that instrument; but

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, q. 64, arts. 1-3. It is of faith that punishment of the demons is eternal, that they are excluded from the vision of God and that they are tormented by fire. Cf. Fourth Lateran Council (DENZINGER, op. cit., n. 429); Constitution "Benedictus Deus" of Benedict XII (DENZINGER, op. cit., n. 530-1); and Council of Florence (DENZINGER, op. cit., n. 714). All of these characteristics of the punishment of hell are also clear from the Scriptures.

this is to say no more than that these things are indeed instruments, for that is exactly what happens with every instrument we ourselves make use of. St. Thomas¹ thought that the punishing effect of fire on Satan and his angels was one of confinement, that is, by the divine power this fire placed definite physical limits to the activity of the devil and his angels. That may seem a small thing until it is remembered that the angels are naturally masters of the physical world, supremely independent of all beneath them and superior in power to all the physical world can offer; and that the cause of their downfall was a pride that could not brook dominion even by God. Here, in the fire of hell, they are subjected to the meanest scale of physical being, subjected to a humiliation divinely proportioned to the exaggeration of their pride.

There you have Satan in his kingdom: engulfed by the blackest despair, bitterly hating himself for his plight and all else that escapes that same plight, yet hating himself yet more for this burning opposition to all that is good; beyond mercy and beyond asking for it; still consumed with the pride that hurled him here and subjected to humiliation beyond all bearing by the confining walls of hell's fire. With him in his rebellion against dependence on God were angels from every choir of the heavenly hierarchy;² moved by his example and entranced by their own perfection they followed Satan in his pride and now make up the élite of hell's company.

What is the social life of the demons' community? The answer to this question gives us the final, awful insight into the agony of Satan's punishment and the gnashing hatred that makes any good thing or thought an impossibility to him.

The sin of pride destroyed nothing of the natural perfections of the fallen angels, with the result that there is a kind of hierarchy in hell. There are two ghastly notes about that hierarchy: first there is nothing of peace about it but rather the violence of superior power that is at the same time galling to pride and merciless to inferiors; second, that supremacy is always a supremacy in evil and so a still greater source of disorder and the misery of disorder's realisation. Satan, as the prince of darkness, is more bitterly punished by the very fact of his supremacy

¹ *Summa Theologica*, supplementum, q. 72, art. 3.

² This is the very nearly universal doctrine of theologians.

in evil, as, in the physical order, a man is not made happier or more perfect by having a worse disease than his fellow sufferers.¹

Pride is a complete barrier to social life, to common effort and common goals; for pride holds all else in contempt in defence of one's own excellence. It insists on being alone and being blind. So, the only bond of union in this diabolic community is the embrace of evil and the detestation of good. It is hard for us to appreciate the full vileness of this for, of course, we never meet any such unadulterated evil in this world. There is something of a parallel in the impossible supposition of a group of men bound together only by the foulness of their common disease; not, you understand, by their common suffering and a merciful appreciation of the misery of the other, but by the one factor of foulness. Obviously, this would be no community at all, for the very foulness would repel any intimacy; and this is literally true of hell: it is not so much a community as a horde of the damned. It is not only that evil is no bond of union but a barrier to all intimacy; there is the even more intrinsic impossibility imposed by pride. Each of these demons is in hell because of the sin of pride; and pride, of its very nature, is self-love to the exclusion of all others, an imprisoning, isolating thing that is completely successful social suicide.²

In hell, with its violent subjection devoid of peace and its double barriers of evil and pride, it would be foolish to expect much of social communication; but it is hard for us to conceive the degree of communication's perversion that adds to the chaos of hell. In heaven, there is the constant sharing of truth by the superior angels to the inferior ones; and the constant speech which opens up the rich personalities of the inferior angels to the superior ones; but all this is the overflow of goodness and happiness, of treasure too great to be dammed up in any one creature. In hell Satan refuses to share his superior knowledge; hatred, bitterness, despair, detestation of all others combine to urge him on to any distortion of truth open to him, and away from any least trace of justice. He is indeed the father of lies. As for the personalities of speech, it is unthinkable to one consumed by pride to open the doors of his heart to any of these others whom he so

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, q. 109, art. 2 et ad 3 um.

² *Ibid.*, et ad 2 um.

detests, or to reveal to another the horrors of guilt and despair that flood the depths of his being.¹

We have begun to suspect something of the utter misery of individual life and the total destruction of social life where men are fed on a diet of lies instead of being nourished on truth, where the driving force at work is hatred instead of love, and where accomplishment is denied to the individual or held in theory and practice to a level beneath his powers. Yet, in the very worst of these circumstances, the lies must wear the guise of truth, love cannot be totally excluded, and there is heaven ahead for the most hopeless prisoner. In hell, truth, love, accomplishment have no place; there the lie holds full sway, hatred is in full command, complete and rampant injustice makes every individual a relentless enemy of all, and despair is the air everyone breathes. For a mind made for truth, a will made for goodness, and an existence that has looked to far, full goals there is no more complete, abysmal failure; and so no more devastating punishment.

It is true that within the merciful limits of divine permission the devils do tempt men, serving as exercise boys to the practice of virtue or executioners of divine justice.² It is also true that their conquests of men or rather men's surrender to their blandishments can add human souls of men to the diabolic company. But this is by no means a kind of antidote for diabolic misery, a relief from unalloyed agony, or a release from the double pain of hell. There is no joy in hell's conquests, but only greater disgust, greater self-detestation, greater despair. The drunkard or the libertine can assure us at first hand that victory in evil does not diminish the evil but increases it, and the shackles of slavery to sin are not loosened by sin's accomplishment, but made more heavily secure. The malignant power and ruthless hatred of Satan are seen most clearly perhaps in just those terms: he has been more victorious in evil than any other creature, he has steadily maintained the most execrable accomplishment of sin. He is the Enemy of God, of man, of all that is good because he has been the greatest enemy of himself; no one knows that better than the devil himself.

WALTER FARRELL, O.P.

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1a, art. 3.

² *Ibid.*, q. 114, art. 1 et ad 1 um.

THE ADVERSARY

REVELATION warns us that there is a disembodied intelligence which is malignant and ceaselessly hostile to men. If one asks whether this disembodied intelligence is a person—is there a *personal* devil?—the answer must be, that according to general Christian teaching the devil is not a person in the same sense as the Holy Ghost is a person, nor in the same sense as you or I are individual persons; but he has real personality, in some sense comparable to divine and to human personality, but by no means the same as either. The Fathers of the Church often speak of the devil very much as they speak of sin and of death; and in many passages in their writings one could use the words *sin* or *death* or *the devil* indifferently.¹ It is not so much that the devil is made a personification of the death-principle and the sin-principle, as that death and sin are rather made the embodiments, in the temporal order, of what the devil is in the spiritual, and provide the aptest imagery in which to picture the devil. The devil is certainly not a man with horns, hooves and a tail. Nevertheless, Scripture constantly uses personal pronouns of the devil; and though one must beware of attributing to that malign purposive intelligence the qualities we generally associate with a human person, the devil, according to the Christian faith, in some true sense is personal. Lactantius calls the devils: “*spiritus tenues et incomprehensibiles*”, thin and unseizable spirits, referring to their physical nature; but he might justly have meant that they must appear thin and incomprehensible to our minds.²

Could we know of this hostile intelligence apart from revelation, that is, abstracting from Scripture and the teaching of the Church? Evidence might be alleged from a variety of sources: the amount of evil in the world, the cross-grainedness of conflicting good purposes, the wickedness which seems sometimes more than human; then various phenomena associated with possessed

¹ Cf. for instance, ST. ATHANASIUS, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, ch. 25.

² *Div. Inst.*, ch. 15.

persons, the practice of black magic, alleged pacts with evil spirits, the deleterious effects produced on those who dabble in certain forms of spiritism; the temptations to which the best of men are subject; and, lastly, the very wide agreement among so many different races of men. To estimate the value of these reasons would be long and tedious, and I incline to think that the difficulty of excluding unknown forces of nature, and the liability of the human mind to error, makes any definite conclusion somewhat hazardous.

In fact, Christians believe in the devil because it is revealed doctrine, which involves mysteries; and it is revealed not only in explicit statements of Holy Writ—innumerable texts can be cited—but in the whole of the Christian outlook relative to what is called by St. Paul “the mystery of iniquity” and its practical bearing on human conduct and human destiny. For the sake of convenience the following four headings may be made:

First: against all forms of dualism, Christianity denies that evil is as ultimate as good, that an evil principle is as necessary and eternal as God. Evil rose not from the nature of things, but from the free choice of a creature of God.

Second: against Pelagianism, Christianity denies that man, as we know him now by experience, is the only possible state of man. Man, by absolute possibility, need not inevitably be destined to interior struggle, self-division, and to death; and so our concept of man must be derived from Adam and from Christ, both of whom were so constituted that inclinations to disloyalty to God could only arise from without and never from within themselves. It was through the devil that man sinned and spoiled the nature God had given him.

Third: the doctrine of the Redemption affirms that the Word of God took flesh in order to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John iii. 8), “that through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil” (Heb. ii. 14). Christian writers speculated much about the exact manner of this destruction; but about the fact there was never the slightest doubt.

Fourth: the doctrine of the need of grace affirms that without grace no man is capable of “overcoming the wiles of the devil and the concupiscence of the flesh” except by daily help from God.¹

¹ *Indiculus Caelestini*, in the year 431; cf. DENZINGER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, ed. 24, Herder, Barcelona, 1946, n. 132.

This touches the practical matter of guidance in the spiritual life, and of Christian humility.

To deal more at length with each heading:

DUALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN CONTEMPT FOR SATAN

Why Christians Mock the Devil

Dualism took many forms, but in all its forms it tended to belittle human nature. Generally, matter was regarded as bad and spirit good; hence the union of matter and spirit in man was looked upon as, at best, a transitory expedient, from which the spirit must escape in order to live its own proper life. Very often also the devil was identified with the eternal spirit of evil. The Priscillianists of the sixth century held that the conception and formation of the human body was the work of the devil, condemned marriage, and had a horror of procreation in all its forms. They rejected the resurrection of the body. In practice, they either inculcated unreasonable asceticism, self-mutilation and even suicide; or encouraged fleshly indulgence, since, as the body was in any case evil, nothing that happened in it really affected the soul. The Priscillianists were only one instance of those endless varieties of dualistic tendency from the Docetists of the first century, the Manichees of the second, third, and fourth, down to the Albigensians of the twelfth and thirteenth, against which so much of Christian controversy raged, and so much of Christian doctrine was formulated.¹

Against them, the Christian position was that evil originated in the free choice of a created spirit, and that matter was not eternal nor made by the evil spirit, but was created by God; and against them the final Christian argument was always the Incarnation, which at once showed that flesh and blood were good since God made them His own, and that the evil spirit could be overcome by man.

In the Christian scheme, the enemy to be overcome was not matter, nor even principally the desires of the body, but the spiritual power of a malignant but finite spirit. To the Christian, the devil had sinned by trying to be equal to God; but to the Dualist the devil quite literally was like God, indeed, not only like

¹ For the Priscillianists, cf. DENZINGER, op. cit., nn. 238, 241, 242; the Albigensians, DENZINGER, op. cit., nn. 401, 402, 428.

God, but another kind of ultimate God, making darkness and disorder and hate and vileness and falsehood as eternal and as powerful as God. For this reason he is by Christians made a figure of contempt, and the faithful were taught to despise him. In St. Athanasius's *Life of St. Anthony*, which was written probably about 357, and became exceptionally popular and influential, we read the ancient saint's exhortation:

"When the prince of demons appears like this, the crafty one, he tries to strike terror by speaking great things, as the Lord revealed to Job, 'he counteth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood, yea he counteth the sea as a pot of ointment, and the depth of the abyss as a captive and the abyss as a covered walk' [Job xli 18 ff.]. And by the prophet, 'I will grasp the whole world in my hand as a nest, and take it up as eggs that have been left' [Isa. x. 14]. Such are their boasts and professions that they may deceive the godly. But not even then ought we, the faithful, to fear his appearance or give heed to his words. For he is a liar and speaketh of truth never a word. In spite of his big words and his enormous boldness, there is no doubt he was drawn with a hook by the Saviour, and as a beast of burden he had his nostrils bored through with stakes, and as a runaway he was dragged by the ring in his nose, and his tongue was tied with a cord [Job xl. 19 ff.]. And he was bound by the Lord as a sparrow, that we should mock at him."¹

This tradition, especially when any form of dualism appeared dangerous, was manifest in the whole history of the Church; and our English mystery plays of the Middle Ages provide instances of it. In them the devil is a comic figure: comic because his bigness and struttings and threatenings are quite futile. Hence perhaps in Gothic architecture the devils are made grotesque; they appear under multitudinous shapes and forms of men and animals, distorted and terrifying in isolation, but as subsidiary ornaments harmoniously contributing to the glory of God's building.

Satanic Envy of Mankind

But in the patristic writings against dualism, the devil is not only an instance proving the sovereign goodness of God, the

¹ ATHANASIUS, *Life of St. Anthony*, in WACE and SHAFF, *Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, Parker & Co., Oxford, p. 202.

fallibility of every created will, and the futility of opposition to God; he becomes a very proof of the dignity of man. Wearisome becomes the Fathers' insistence that the reason for the devil's antagonism to man is envy and jealousy. They admit that a spiritual being is, in itself, in a higher grade and kind of being; nevertheless, God so endowed man that he roused the envy of the fallen spirit, indeed, the very fall of that spirit is not implausibly explained as caused by envy of man rising from pride. Various reasons are suggested for this envy of man. St. Cyprian,¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa² and others suggest envy, because a corporal creature is made to the image of God; St. Basil,³ because man is made like the angels; St. Maximus the Confessor and Anastasius Sinaita, because man has dominion over the earth and control of matter, which the devil wished to have as his exclusive prerogative;⁴ St. Athanasius quotes St. Anthony, because the devil did not wish men to go up thither whence he had fallen.⁵ St. Augustine says that in his day several—"nonnulli"—held that the first sin of the devil had been envy of man; and rejects the view on the ground that envy really rises from pride and not *vice versa*,⁶ in which Cassian, and later St. Thomas, follow him.⁷

St. Irenaeus has an enigmatic phrase, that the devil found in man "the beginning and occasion of his apostasy";⁸ and some theologians conjecture that the occasion of the devil's pride had something to do with a revelation of the Incarnation. Suarez cites John viii: "You seek to kill me . . . you are of your father the devil and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth", and argues that the pride of the devil led him to desire the hypostatic union for himself; a view rightly disproved by the argument St. Thomas had given long before, that no one can

¹ *De Zelo et Livore*, ch. 3, n. 4; MIGNE, *Patres Latini*, 4, 640.

² *Oratio Cat.*, ch. 6; MIGNE, *Patres Graeci*, 44, 456.

³ *Quod Deus non est Auctor Malorum*, 8-10; P. G. 31, 352-4.

⁴ MAXIMUS, *Capitula*, 4, n. 48; P. G. 90, 1325; ANASTASIUS SINAITA, *Quaest. ad Thass.*, 31; P. G. 89, 568.

⁵ ATHANASIUS, *Life of St. Anthony*, n. 22, op. cit., p. 200. This is the earliest hint I have found of the view common in St. Thomas's time that men were created to take the place of the fallen angels; which St. Thomas respectfully rejects as not revealed; cf. *Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 23, art. 7.

⁶ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, ch. 11, n. 14.

⁷ CASSIAN, *Coll.*, 9, 10; P. L. 49, 736; ST. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 63, art. 1.

⁸ "Initium et materiam apostasiae habens hominem," *Contra Haereses*, 3, 23; P. G. 7, 965.

really wish to cease to be, which a desire for the hypostatic union would involve. Nevertheless, Scheeben and Boyer modify this view of Suárez by conjecturing that possibly the devil's pride led him to object to God's uniting Himself personally with human nature, which would have diminished his own glory as an angel.¹ This would indeed explain the devil's envy of man, and is not contrary to St. Thomas's mind, since he holds that Adam before his sin had a revelation of the Incarnation, not in its reparative purpose, but as it was the crown of glory, and the angels may well have been granted some similar revelation.²

When the Jews were seeking to kill Christ (John viii. 40), our Lord accused them of acting under the instigation of the devil, who "was a murderer from the beginning". Now St. John also says that the devil "sinned from the beginning" (1 John iii. 8). Perhaps in our Lord's words about the devil's being a murderer from the beginning there is a compenetration of truths: the reference is to the death his malignancy brought upon Adam and Eve, and to the death of Abel, which is a figure of the death of Christ (cf. Matt. xxiii. 35; Heb. xii. 24), and also to his first sin, which set up the first separation from the living God, in Whom alone creatures have true life. However that may be, it is manifest that the devil's mind was murderous, and hence hostile to man, from the beginning either of man, or of his own rejection of God.

Thus, against dualism, the Church reduced the devil to his proper status as a creature of God, defended the essential soundness of composite human nature, and asserted the superiority of man without sin to the evil spirit, who even envied man.

PELAGIAN DISBELIEF IN THE DEVIL

The Emperor of Death

The essential error of Pelagianism was that it denied the need of redemption, and bound God within the limits of nature as we experience it. Death is not only natural, but inevitable; sin is merely the decision of a will balanced in perfect equilibrium; the devil gave bad example, and, in fact, has small power over man, since man, if he wishes to use his free will, can avoid all sins. Grace is a mere extrinsic help, the giving of the law, the giving

¹ Cf. BOYER, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, ed. altera, 1933, p. 517.

² *Summa Theologica*, par. 2-2, q. 2, art. 7.

of an inspiring example by Christ; baptism is not given to make bad good, but to make good better, and infants dying without baptism go to eternal life, though not to the kingdom of heaven. Julian of Eclanum argued bitterly against Augustine, that to say that man was under the domination of the evil spirit was unworthy of God and of man alike; and accused Augustine of Manichaeism because he held the inherited weakness of humanity. In Julian's view, all that is needed is to change the outward framework of man's life, to urge man to use his own free will, and humanity can save itself.¹ In this scheme, there is no need of a divine Redeemer; and, as Bishop Gore neatly remarked: "The Nestorian Christ is the fitting Saviour of the Pelagian man."

Now if one takes Pelagianism upon the purely natural ground, it is superficial. It does not account at all for the empirical prevalence of evil and of human failure as manifest in history. It does not account for individual and social heredity and its influence upon man: on Pelagian principles, each man is born undetermined by his heredity. It does not account for the sense that all men have in general, and the saints more particularly, of the sad divergence between their ideal and their actual accomplishment. Lastly, it does not account at all for the inexpressible quality of grief on the death of loved ones, nor for those yearnings after a better life here, and for complete immortality, which are manifest in the hearts of men; and it reduced God to the status of a remote Law-giver.

Whatever, however, be the philosophic objections to Pelagianism, it was clearly not the traditional Christian faith. According to that faith, the world and man as we experience them are not the world and man as God made them, or as God intended them to be; if one looks at man historically, one will not conceive a right idea of the human nature which God made, but only an idea of the human nature which has been flawed and warped by evil. The only idea of man as God means him to be is to be found in Christ, and in Adam, the two really typical men who embody God's idea of man: and it is only by reference to them that man is to be judged, just as it is by mysterious unity with them that man fulfils his destiny. The sin-principle, the death-principle, both of

¹ Perhaps the best exposition of Pelagianism is by Anthony Cassini, in the appendix to vol. 4 of Petavius's well-known work on patristic theology. Julian's arguments are found in St. Augustine's *Opus Imperfectum Contra Julianum*, MIGNE, P. L. 45.

which symbolise the spirit of evil, as they in turn are symbolised by him, entered from without into God's making of man, and marred the work which God had made; man lives in "the empire of death" and none save the divine Saviour can destroy him who has the empire of death, "that is to say, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

It is common among Christian writers to speak of man as the captive of the devil, or even, as under the dominion of the devil; the Council of Trent speaks so: man through sin incurred death, "and with death, captivity under his power who thereafter held the kingship of death, that is, the devil".¹ Now, as to the exact nature and quality of this servitude to the devil, the Church has issued no formal definition; but it may safely be said that in the concrete it consists in man's inability to keep God's law and to avoid sin; without being joined to Christ through grace, man in fact will inevitably be joined to the devil, for, as St. John says, "he that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8).

Now this inevitability of sin lies in man's present nature. The Greek Fathers spoke of it as *φθορά*, a corruption, a principle of dissolution, in man,² a corruption which was at once physical and moral, a general tendency to split up and divide all the forces of man, both in himself, and with regard to God and to his fellow men. Wars and strifes are a result of this corruption, and all the sins enumerated by St. Paul in his first chapter to the Romans.³ The Latins called it "concupiscentia", drawing upon St. Paul's seventh chapter to the Romans, and meant that surge of passion, by no means necessarily of a sensual kind, though perhaps most obvious in sensual temptations, which makes man divided in himself, finding "a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members" (Rom. vii. 23); or, as Mgr. Knox translates: "I observe another disposition in my lower self, which raises war against the disposition of my conscience, and so I am handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin which my lower self contains." The lower self has more than a sneaking weakness for the devil,

¹ Sess. 5, can. 1; DENZINGER, op. cit., n. 788.

² Cf. ST. ATHANASIUS, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, ch. 6.

³ Cf. ST. ATHANASIUS, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, chs. 4 and 5.

and in this sense man is captive of the devil; Christ, and Christ alone, rescues us "from the power of darkness and transfers us to the kingdom of his beloved son" (Col. i. 13).

The Enemy Within the Citadel

The Pelagians, notably Bishop Julian of Eclanum, maintained that man by his very constitution as man was meant to die, and was meant to have the struggle between appetite and reason; and held that to speak of "concupiscence" as being of the devil was effectively Manichæan, and implied that human generation was evil, in as much as it brought forth beings for the devil. No modern naturalistic philosopher could have argued more vehemently, or more acutely, than this heretical bishop of the fifth century; and no modern reporter could be more scrupulous than St. Augustine in giving the fullest exact rendering of the arguments and very words of the pleader. Those who look upon the Christian attitude towards sex as somehow morbid or unduly repressive can find argument after argument set forth in St. Augustine's painstaking enumeration of Julian's reasoning, together with his refutation of them, though Augustine never fears to let it be seen when Julian scores a point. Augustine's fundamental and almost wearisomely repeated argument is the need of redemption: if men are wholly good, if nature is completely uninjured, if self-control is within man's natural power, if infants are unaffected by their origin from sinful mankind, then what is the need for a Saviour, what need for rebirth in Christ, what need of grace, of baptism, of the Eucharist, of prayer? In particular, what is the need of baptism and what is the reality behind the exorcisms in the ceremonies of baptism? If the child is born in the state in which Adam was born, what need has it of baptism? Is not Christ the Saviour of infants? St. Paul says that Christ died for all: is this really true? And is it true that all died in Christ's death? And if all died with Christ, then, as St. Paul says, "being alive no longer means living with our own life, but with his life who died for us and has risen again". But, on Pelagian principles, what is the sense of speaking of a new life in Christ? Presumably our old life, being good, would be good enough.

From this universal need of redemption, Augustine draws the inevitable conclusion that "all who are born with sin, by God's judgment, are under the devil, unless they are reborn in

Christ";¹ and "we assuredly say the reason why those who are born are under the devil until they are reborn, is the contagion of sin from their origin".² Is this a Manichaean view, as Julian so often asserted? Augustine answers that, on the contrary, Julian's view is Manichaean, since he holds that the amount of evil in the world arises purely from the nature of things, and would have existed even in Paradise. On Augustine's teaching, evil is an intrusion into a better plan made by God; something which arose from the refusal of created wills to co-operate with their Creator. Evil rose first in the overweening pride of a created spirit, and then in man's weakened will, which the devil exploits; evil need not have been, and consequently *need not be*, since Christ gives power to overcome the rebellious forces within the citadel of man's soul. Augustine's doctrine of concupiscence as a sickness in the heart of man must be taken together with his correlative doctrine of the healing power of the grace of Christ. Evil desire, sin, death, all these bind men to the devil, since they are the realm of the spirit hostile to God; but He who originally "made man right" (Eccles. vii. 30) "will form this humbled body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body" (Phil. iii. 21).³

This "corruption" in man's nature, or "concupiscentia", must be referred back to God's original making of man, when his mind was subject to God, the lower powers of his soul to the rational mind, and his body to his soul.⁴ The breaking of this harmony, this integrity, by the first sin, left man divided in himself, and left openings for the devil's entrance into the dark and mysterious spheres of psychological conflict; before sin, the devil's suggestions were only from the exterior, afterwards they can enter into the mind itself, since the mind is no longer completely whole and properly ordered in its relations to God and within itself.⁵ Similarly, the temptation of Christ could only be by exterior

¹ *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, lib. 2, cap. 12, n. 25; MIGNE, P. L. 44, 451.

² *Contra Julianum Pelagianum*, lib. 3, cap. 5, n. 12; MIGNE, P. L. 44, 708.

³ On Augustine's doctrine of original sin and its effects, the two works in English which are best known are J. B. MOZLEY, *The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, and N. P. WILLIAMS, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*. It may be doubted if they correctly represent St. Augustine; and of more recent days they have been sharply criticised, as have so many of the "liberal" theologians, by the neo-Lutheran school, notably by REINOLD NIEBUHR in his *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. To enter into the Lutheran and Calvinistic accounts of total depravity, which is so profound that it would seem to leave little if anything for the devil to do, would take us too far afield.

⁴ ST. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, 2-2, q. 164, art. 2.

⁵ ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, q. 165, art. 2, ad 2.

suggestion, not by any interior influence upon Christ's imagination; for the latter presupposes some sinfulness, that is, some flaw in the integrity of the man, which could not be in Christ.¹ However, discussion of the nature of diabolical temptations must be reserved for the fourth heading.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE REDEMPTION AND THE DEVIL

Christ's Victory Through Defeat

In Genesis the absolute opposition between Christ and the devil, and Christ's triumph, is foretold: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii. 15). The reference is to Christ and to His Mother, although this does not exclude a reference to the whole of the human race, since Christ is the representative man, the Son of Man.² The opposition is manifest at the beginning of Christ's public life, when the man possessed by an unclean spirit cried out: "Why dost thou meddle with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Hast thou come to make an end of us?"³ In the parable of the tares sown in the field, the tares are the "sons of the wicked one", and "the enemy who sowed them is the devil" (Matt. xiii. 39); while in the parable of the sower "the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they cannot find faith and be saved" (Luke viii. 12). The opposition of the Jews to Christ was inspired by the devil, as Christ repeats more than once: "You belong to your father, that is, the devil, and are eager to gratify the appetites which are your father's. He from the first was a murderer; and as for truth, he has never taken his stand upon that; there is no truth in him. When he utters falsehood, he is only uttering what is natural to him; he is all false, and it was he who gave falsehood its birth" (John viii. 44). The Jews declared that He overcame devils by the power of the devil (John x. 21), and was Himself possessed by the devil.

The encompassing of His death Christ explicitly assigns to the

¹ St. THOMAS, *ibid.*, q. 41, art. 1, ad 3.

² Cf. Pius IX, in his Bull on the Immaculate Conception, *Acta Pii IX*, t. 1, 607.

³ Mark i. 24; and cf. Mark iii. 11; v. 1-20; vii. 25; Luke iv. 33; Matthew viii. 28; ix. 32; xvi. 21. It may be remarked in passing that possession in some sense by an evil or unclean spirit by no means excludes a natural disease, but rather affirms it; the devil being a spirit of disorder, his influence more or less direct is to be found wherever there is disorder, and particularly in the mental and spiritual fields.

devil. St. Luke puts it: "But now Satan found his way into the heart of Judas, who was called Iscariot, one of the twelve" (Luke xxii. 3); and Christ says: "Have I not chosen all twelve of you? And one of you is a devil" (John vi. 71). And at the supper, "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon, the Iscariot, to betray him", and, a little later, "the morsel once given, Satan entered into him; and Jesus said to him, Be quick on thy errand."¹ When chief priests and temple officers came to arrest Him, He said: "But this is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). His crucifixion was to mean that "sentence is now being passed on this world; now is the time when the prince of this world is to be cast out. Yes, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. In saying this, he prophesied the death he was to die" (John xii. 31ff.). And again: "He who rules this world has had judgment passed upon him already" (John xvi. 12). "One is coming, who has power over the world, but no hold over me" (John xiv. 30). Although these sayings are mysterious, still it is luminously clear that Christ regarded His death as instigated by the prince of this world, and that His death was to bring condemnation and judgment upon this prince, the devil.

St. John and St. Paul refer to the triumph of Christ over the devil, as to a thing well known: "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). "Because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same: that through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). And in Colossians St. Paul speaks of the triumph of Christ over the powers of evil: "Christ . . . blotted out the handwriting that was against us, with its decrees; lifted it clean away, nailing it to the cross, and despoiled the principalities and powers, and put them to open shame,

¹ John xiii. 2, 27. It should be remarked that Judas' treachery was real and had disastrous effects upon Christ's efforts to convert the Jewish people; He knew the authorities dare not take Him by day, and hid Himself at night, thus showing that His prophetic knowledge of what in fact was to come by no means led Him to act so as to bring about fulfilment. Quite the contrary: He condemned Judas precisely because his betrayal was disastrous. It is an interesting question what would have happened if Judas had not betrayed Him; human conjecture is baffled, but that is no reason for imagining that Christ automatically acted for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies, just as the fact of the prophecies themselves in no wise relieves Judas or the Jews of their dreadful responsibility for their free choice of evil.

and led them away in triumph through the cross.”¹ St. John in his vision in the Apocalypse says in resounding words:

“The great dragon, serpent of the primal age, was flung down to earth; he whom we call the devil, or satan, the whole world’s seducer, was flung down to earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a voice crying aloud in heaven, The time has come; now we are saved and made strong, our God reigns, and power belongs to Christ, his anointed; the accuser of our brethren is overthrown. Day and night he stood accusing them in God’s presence; but because of the Lamb’s blood and because of the truth to which they bore witness, they triumphed over him, holding their lives cheap till death overtook them. Rejoice over it, heaven, and all you that dwell in heaven” (Apoc. xii. 9–12).

In view of this clear teaching of Scripture, it is not surprising that the Church has always taken for granted that “Christ became man in order to free us from the yoke of the devil”, as the Council of Sens put it in 1140 against Abelard. The Council of Trent, in the preface to the statement upon justification, says that any understanding of the doctrine of justification, that is, of grace, must set out from the acknowledgment that, because of the sin of Adam, all men “were to such an extent slaves of sin, and under the power of the devil and death” (Rom. vi. 20), that neither the force of nature nor the Law of Moses could enable them to be freed therefrom; and this in spite of the fact that free will was not done away with, but only weakened in its forces and biased.²

A Ransom Paid to Satan?

The practical bearing of this doctrine is that Christ died for all (2 Cor. v. 15.), and His death is the objective cause why all receive grace enough to resist both their own weakness and the temptations of the world and of the devil.³ But, if theoretically one asks: “*How* did Christ free us from the power of the devil? What precise aspect or relation in Christ’s death referred specifically to the devil, so as to overcome him and release men from

¹ Colossians ii. 14. The above translation is my own; the passage is most troublesome for translators, as a comparison of the Douay, Westminster, Knox, Authorised and Revised versions will show.

² DENZINGER, op. cit., n. 793.

³ This is effectively defined doctrine, since the condemnations of Jansenism by Innocent X in 1653, and by Alexander VIII in 1690; cf. DENZINGER, op. cit., nn. 1092, 1096, 1294, 1295, 1296.

his domination?" then the answer becomes disconcertingly difficult and troublesome. The Fathers of the Church picture the thing as a struggle between God and the devil for the souls of men; and in that struggle the devil's weapons are lying, deceit, hatred, calumny, instigation to violence and to murder. God's weapons are truth, justice, love, praise, meekness and humility; and God conquers in the struggle. In depicting the conflict, however, the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers sometimes use language which has caused scandal to some who have taken it too literally; Origen, for instance, says: "We were sold to sin, He redeemed us with His own blood from him who had bought us. . . . We term ransom that money which is paid to the enemy to free the captives he holds. The human race was such a captive, having been vanquished in the conflict with sin, and taken prisoner by the devil. Christ became our ransom, that is, He delivered Himself to our enemies. He shed all His precious blood for which the devil thirsted."¹ The devil had bought us with a special kind of currency: "His coin, the coin which bears his image upon it, is murder, adultery, thieving, and in general all forms of sin. Such is the devil's money, of which his treasury is, alas, all too full. With this money he bought us and received a deed of ownership over us"—the "handwriting against us" of which St. Paul speaks in Colossians ii. 14, which Christ affixed to the cross. As a ransom price, the devil demanded the precious blood of Christ;² God gave him this price by allowing him to kill Christ. Nevertheless, the devil deceived himself; because Christ could not be held in the realm of death, and in rising from the dead, Christ broke the power of death and the gates of hell, and made us all partakers in His resurrection.³

Often the Fathers, v.g. St. Gregory of Nyssa,⁴ St. Jerome,⁵ Pacian of Barcelona,⁶ St. Augustine,⁷ and many others, speak of the "rights" of the devil over mankind, and picture the redemption in such terms that it appears as a kind of legal transaction in which God had to respect the devil's rights and pay him his just due before man could be rightly liberated. But the real thought, as

¹ *In Rom.* 3, 7; MIGNE, P. G. 14, 945.

² *In Matt.* 16, 8; MIGNE, P. G. 13, 1397.

³ *Ibid.*, col. 1116.

⁴ *Oratio catechica magna*, 26; MIGNE, P. G. 26, 68.

⁵ *Ep.* 72; MIGNE, P. L. 16, 1245.

⁶ *Sermo de Baptismo*, 4; MIGNE, P. L. 13, 1092.

⁷ *De Libero Arbitrio*, lib. 3, cap. 10, 29-31; MIGNE, P. L. 32, 1285 ff.

has often been pointed out by Catholics and non-Catholics alike,¹ is that through sin man belongs naturally to the kingdom of death and of the devil; and that in freeing mankind from sin and death and the devil, God's plan was not to make violent irruptions into the natural consequences of things, but rather to accomplish the redemption with a wisdom which respects the natures He has created. St. Thomas faithfully sums up the basic thought of the Fathers, when he places among the reasons which made the death of Christ a suitable manner of redemption the following:

"Liberation through the death of Christ redounds more to the dignity of man, so that, as man had been deceived and conquered by the devil, it should be a man who should conquer the devil, and as man had merited death, so it should be man who by dying overcame death."

And to the objection about the devil's "rights", which he puts thus:

"He who violently and unjustly retains something, rightly is despoiled of it by power of a superior. But the devil had no right over man, whom he deceived by fraud and by a sort of violence kept in subjection. Therefore it would seem more suitable that Christ should have despoiled the devil by a mere exercise of power without enduring death,"

he answers:

"Although the devil unjustly had seized upon man, nevertheless man because of sin had justly been left by God in servitude to the devil; and hence it was most suitable that by justice man should be freed from servitude to the devil, Christ making satisfaction in His passion. For it was most suitable 'in order to overcome the pride of the devil, who is a traitor to justice and a lover of power, that Christ should overcome the devil and free man, not by the sheer power of the Deity, but also by the justice and humility of the Passion' as Augustine says in bk. 13 of the Trinity, ch. 13, 14 and 15."²

There undoubtedly, as unprejudiced reading will show, is the

¹ Cf. v.g. PETAVIUS, *De Verbo Incarnato*, lib. 2, cap. 5, 8-18; THOMASSINUS, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, 1, 3, 1-19; and more recently GUSTAF AULÉN of Lund, in *Christus Victor*, trans. A. G. Hebert, London, S.P.C.K., 1931, p. 64, etc.

² *Summa Theologica*, par. 3, q. 46, art. 3.

fundamental thought of the Fathers: God's providence in allowing man to be subject to the devil's wiles and assaults was fitting and proper; and the manner of the Redemption by Christ's death, which enables man to overcome them, was equally fitting and proper. The struggle between Christ and the devil is naturally depicted by popular preachers in vivid style, and with embellishments which are not meant to be taken literally. Thus the cross of Christ is often called a fish-hook upon which the devil was caught: in avidity to swallow up all men in death, he seized upon Christ, who in fact was deathless and broke the power of the demon to drag men to death. The breaking of the devil's power sometimes consists in Christ's entrance into Hades, smashing the doors and permitting all the prophets of old to escape; and sometimes the metaphor of the devil being a dragon is pursued to the extreme of saying that the cross of Christ pierced a large hole in the dragon's jaws, through which all Christians who are seized in death by the devil, and would be wholly swallowed, can escape.¹ Sometimes the devil's power is said to be broken because he had a right to draw all other men to death, but when he caused Christ to be killed, he exceeded his rights, and therefore was justly deprived of his power over other men. St. Augustine even suggests that the cross of Christ was a kind of mouse-trap in which the devil was caught, the bait being Christ's humility and obedience.

To pursue this aspect of the Redemption in its historical development, and its theoretic implications, would take far longer than the limits of this paper permit. One thing might be added: the Fathers do not regard Christ as merely one individual man, but as somehow embracing in His humanity the whole of mankind. There is a mysterious union of all men with God by the mere fact of the Incarnation; and a further and still more mysterious union of those in grace with Christ as a result of Christ's atonement. Hence, in the struggle with the demon, it is not Christ alone Who struggles and overcomes, but, so to speak, human nature itself, which is somehow universalised in Christ. In Christ *the idea*

¹ Cf. v.g. the many citations given by RIVIÈRE in his *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, vol. 2, pp. 111 ff. This book, although containing much invaluable matter, by no means speaks the last word on the Atonement. Rivière's other volumes on the devil and the Redemption are marred by an attention to Turmel unmerited save by the necessities of local controversies and conditions. AULÉN's *Christus Victor* does better justice to the thought of the Fathers; but it, too, is marred by an excessive desire to fit everything into categories, the great danger of the attempt to discover one leading "motif" in wide historical sweeps.

of man becomes changed from an idea of a being necessarily subject to sinfulness and death, and so to the spirit of evil, to an idea of a Being sinless, deathless and essentially victor over the spirit of evil.

THE POWER OF THE DEVIL TO TEMPT US

That we are tempted not only by the world and the flesh but also by the devil, is clear both from Scripture, and from the common teaching of the Fathers and of spiritual writers. St. Paul puts what has ever been the Christian outlook in a passage in his letter to the Ephesians, superlatively translated by Mgr. Knox:

“Draw your strength from the Lord, from that mastery which his power supplies. You must wear all the weapons in God’s armoury, if you would find strength to resist the cunning of the devil. It is not against flesh and blood that we enter the lists; we have to do with principdoms and powers, with those who have the mastery of the world in these dark days, with malign influences in an order higher than ours. Take up all God’s armour, then; so you will be able to stand your ground when the evil time comes, and be found still on your feet, when all the task is over. Stand fast, your loins girt with truth, the breastplate of justice fitted on, and your feet shod in readiness to publish the gospel of peace. With all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fire-tipped arrows of your wicked enemy; make the helmet of salvation your own, and the sword of the spirit, God’s word. Use every kind of prayer and supplication; pray at all times in the spirit; keep awake to that end with all perseverance; offer your supplication for all the saints” (vi. 10–18).

If one may say so, it is an ideological warfare which seems envisaged: and truth, justice, faith, the word of God, apostolic zeal are the Christian’s weapons. St. Peter says much the same:

“Be sober and watch. Your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour; whom withstand ye, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the selfsame sufferings are being endured by your brethren throughout the world” (1 Pet. v. 8, 9, Westminster Version).

Here the immediate reference appears to be to calumnies or persecutions against Christians, and not to interior temptations of

individuals, though these are not excluded.¹ The devil tempts to anger (Eph. iv. 26), to impurity (1 Cor. vii. 5), to refusal to forgive (2 Cor. ii. 10, 11), to resistance to the truth (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26), to abandonment of the faith (1 Tim. vi. 1), to pride (1 Tim. vi. 6); riches can be a snare of the devil (1 Tim. vi. 9), and the devil can transform himself into an angel of light, the better to deceive and ensnare (2 Cor. xi. 14).

Indeed, Christian tradition considers subjection to temptation by the devil as much a part of present human nature as is death itself. This is the reason assigned by St. Gregory the Great, and cited by St. Thomas Aquinas, why Christ Himself was tempted: "It was not unworthy of our Redeemer to be willing to be tempted, He who came to be killed; for it was right that just as He came to overcome death by His death, so likewise He should conquer our temptations by His temptations."² Here undoubtedly is latent the thought that Christ is the representative man; and St. Thomas approves St. Ambrose's reason, somewhat mystical, why Christ was tempted in the desert, namely, that Christ went into the desert "in mysterio", so that He might free Adam from the desert into which he was driven after his sin, by conquering the devil also "for me" or in me—*mihi vicisset*. Other reasons for Christ's temptation by the devil are given: to warn us all that no holiness exempts from temptation, to teach us how to conquer temptation, and to give us confidence in Christ's compassion since He Himself has been assailed.³

Why Does God Allow It?

And here the question naturally arises: "Why does God give power to the devil to tempt men?" This question is answered by St. John Chrysostom in his famous letter to his friend Stagirus, who was grievously tormented by diabolical temptations; and his answer comes to this: that if God were obliged to destroy all beings which occasioned evil, He would have to destroy practically everything: our eyes and mouth and hands and feet, all of which can lead us to sin; and even the heavens and the stars and the firmament, which also can be an occasion of sin. Now effectively

¹ Cf. HOLZMEISTER, *Commentarius in Epistolas SS. Petri et Iudae*, par. 1, Lethielleux, Paris, 1937, p. 404. The text was a favourite one of the Fathers, especially of St. John Chrysostom.

² *Summa Theologica*, par. 3, q. 41, art. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, q. 41, art. 1 ad 2.

the devil is only an occasion of sin; because we can overcome all his wiles and snares, which in diverse ways are to man's benefit: they stimulate man to virtue, keep him vigilant, humble, united to God by prayer; and, lastly, they add to man's glory by enabling him to overcome an adversary superior in intelligence and power. And St. John Chrysostom ends by the very quotable remark: "God would never have allowed you to be deprived of so much comfort, nor His servants to be so shamefully afflicted, unless He had known it would redound magnificently to your advantage and glory. And thus what seems a sign of God's abandonment of you, is really a sign of His affection and care."¹

St. Thomas gives what seems the ultimate reason why God permits the devil to tempt men; divine providence, he says, secures the good of inferior beings through superior beings. Now the angels hold a middle place between God and man, and hence it is fitting that they should help men to God. This can take place in two ways, either by direct help, such as the good angels give, or by stirring men to good by attacking them. This latter the wicked angels are allowed to do, "thus helping the good of men, *lest after their sin the wicked angels should be lost to the utility of the natural order.*"² This reason, of course, presupposes the native tendency and will of the devil to envy mankind and to try to encompass their ruin; and God allows the natural order of things to take its course.³ To abolish the influence of spiritual forces, both good and bad, in human life would be as violent and as capricious an interference with the normal effects of the causes God has created, as it would be to prevent the law of gravity operating when some one fell down the shaft of a lift. The influence of good and bad spirits upon us is as natural as is the influence of good and bad men⁴; the existence of evil, indeed, raises questions which ultimately we cannot answer, but granted that problem, the permission by God to the devil to tempt us raises no particular difficulty, though it may, perhaps, sharpen or intensify to certain minds the general problem.

The Demon's Psychological Influence

As to the *manner* of the devil's temptations, it is, of course, part of the faith that he can only do what God allows, as indeed is the

¹ MIGNE, P. G. 47, 424-48.

² *Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 64, art. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, q. 114, art. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pars. 2-2, q. 165, art. 1.

case with wicked men. There is common agreement, too, that the devil does not know the secret thoughts and intentions of men, except in so far as they are disclosed by some movement of the brain or nervous system or body; and the reason is that Scripture and the Fathers take knowledge of men's hearts to be a sign of divinity: "The searcher of hearts and reins is God."¹ Indeed in an English court, with reference to undisclosed intentions, Lord Blackburn cited the quaint judgment of Brian, C. J., during the reign of Edward IV: "It is common learning that the thoughts of a man are not triable, for the devil has not knowledge of man's thoughts."²

Very generally it is held by theologians that the devil has power to exert influence upon the imagination, the nerves, glands and physical organism, but not directly upon the will. This is St. Thomas's view, and he is followed in it by Suarez and the majority of more recent theological writers,³ although the reasons assigned are not always concordant, and depend upon theories more or less well-grounded about the exact nature of angelic power. The view has considerable patristic authority behind it, notably St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius and Cassian; the Fathers very frequently attribute to the devil visions, impressions, emotions, especially of depression, and weariness in well-doing. It must be observed that this view of the power of diabolic influence over men seems to imply that the influence will be unobservable by feeling, ordinary consciousness, and perhaps even unobservable by reason unless enlightened by faith. We are not normally aware by feeling or natural reason of the working in us of God's grace; and indeed it is only by reflection and reason that we know our own spiritual soul. Hence, it is not surprising that the influence of the evil spirit can normally be known to us only by the principles of faith applied to deducing his action from the effects produced in our feelings, inclinations and convictions. Here we enter the field rightly left to spiritual directors, who follow the general norms accepted for the discernment of spirits.

One last question with which to end. Does the devil find any

¹ Psalm vii. 10; and cf. Jeremias xvii. 10; Apocalypse ii. 23; and comments upon Matthew xii. 25; John ii. 25 and xiii. 11, where Christ's knowledge of men's secret thoughts and of the future are urged as proof of His divinity.

² Cited in CHESHIRE and FIFOOT, *Cases on the Law of Contract*, Butterworth & Co., London, 1946, p. 322.

³ Cf. SUAREZ, *De Angelis*, lib. 8, cap. 18, n. 8; PESCH, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, vol. 3, p. 278; HUGON, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, vol. 1, p. 740.

satisfaction when he is successful in tempting us to sin? And if so, how is this consistent with the general doctrine that the devil is even now in hell? If, on the other hand, he finds no joy or satisfaction at a victory over us, why does he exert himself to tempt us? Here we are face to face with our inability to imagine a purely spiritual being, in whom there can be no joy or sorrow such as we experience; but only, in the devil, as St. Thomas puts it, the "recoil of the will against all that is, and against all that is not" (*renisus voluntatis ad id quod est vel non est*). Hence theologians more commonly admit some kind of "fantastical satisfaction"—so St. Thomas—or wretched joy at the power he has to induce men to sin; which very satisfaction in evil, as St. Augustine thinks, is part of his punishment. But St. John Chrysostom says roundly that the devil is in a frenzy—a mania¹—and to try to reduce to reason the madness of inveterate hate and envy is an impossible task.²

The whole burden of revelation tells us that the devil's power is great, the greater that its use is unpredictable by natural reason: what so maddened an enemy will do next no man can tell. The world is as it is, and not as we might like it to be; it contains cobra snakes, cancer, atomic bombs—and the devil. Faith assures us of this, and assures us of the only means of victory: trust in Christ and the power of His cross. But if we neglect those only means, faith equally assures us that the prospect is bleak indeed: the reign of unreason, falsehood, deceit, calumny, hatred, death and unending corruption.

BERNARD LEEMING, S. J.

¹ *Ad Stagirium a daemone vexatum*, MIGNE, P. G. 47, 425.

² Cf. the discussion of Suarez, *op. cit.*, lib. 8, cap. 15 per totum.

SOME ASPECTS OF SATAN'S ACTIVITY IN THIS WORLD

THE SUBJECT under discussion belongs to theology rather than to psychology or to general experience. It is a matter which presents itself with some urgency, owing to the large number of unhappy people who, although they show no sign of possession, nevertheless have recourse to exorcism as a means of deliverance from various purely natural misfortunes and illnesses. It is true to say that while cases of genuine possession are extremely rare, the patients of whom I speak are innumerable. It would not be legitimate to treat them as possessed, for all the evidence goes to show that they are not. On the other hand, they are not invariably or necessarily mental cases, who would have some chance of a cure through psychiatry. The only factor which might appear suspicious is their own explanation of their ills, which they attribute to the influence of the devil; but even this does not in itself constitute a morbid symptom any more than any other erroneous belief would do; and it is precisely the aim of the present article to discover whether, and to what degree, the problem is in fact one of erroneous belief.

Whatever conclusion we may come to, we are now about to consider a great number of unhappy people of every type, whose complaints range over the whole gamut of human miseries; and to see whether our pity can suggest some means of helping them. At this point we may perhaps recall certain passages from the Bible, or certain prayers or liturgical rites which assume the influence of the devil in far wider regions than those where we are accustomed to seek it. A glance at the relevant documents may be enlightening.¹

¹ They will, no doubt, be more fully dealt with in other articles in this volume. From my own point of view, and at the risk of repetition, I felt it necessary to mention them to justify my own conclusions. I do not intend, however, to give a full list of them: it will be enough to pick out a few significant examples.

I

Our Lord calls Satan "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). In the New Testament, and particularly in the Gospel of St. John, where this appellation is found, the word "world" has different connotations. Sometimes it is taken in a favourable or neutral sense, meaning the earth where men dwell; or by metonymy, men themselves, humanity (John i. 9-10; iii. 16, 17, 19; xi. 27, etc.).

More often, however, it is used in an unfavourable sense. "The world" stands for the reign of evil on earth; there is an irreducible opposition between this reign and the reign of God, between this world and Christ and His followers. Jesus said: "I am not of this world. . . . I pray not for the world . . . me it hateth"; and to His disciples: "You are not of the world . . . the world hateth you", and so on (John viii. 23; xvii. 9; vii. 7; xv. 19, etc.; cf. 1 John iii. 13, 14). A perpetual strife rages between the world of darkness—that is to say, error, sin and death—and Jesus, who is light, truth and life. It is of the world so understood that Satan is king.

In a prophetic and highly symbolical style the Apocalypse describes the vicissitudes of the struggle between God's party and Satan's; between the Church of Jesus Christ, the woman who bears children, and the powers of hell; between good and evil; a struggle which ends in the defeat of Satan, "the angel of the bottomless pit", who is cast into it for ever (Apoc. ix, xii, etc.).

We find the same doctrine in St. Paul. The apostles and the faithful have to fight "the rulers of the world of this darkness" (Eph. vi. 12; cf. Col. i. 13). The powers of evil are to be let loose during the period of this struggle, which is to precede the final return of Christ; St. Paul refers to it as "the times", an expression which is also frequently used dislogistically and which then acquires the same sense as "the world"; the apostle is here warning his followers against the ideas and customs of "the world".¹ Now Satan is "the god" of "the world" (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Whoever is alien to the kingdom of Christ is a subject of Satan. Through original sin, committed at the instigation of Satan, humanity fell from the state of grace and now lives under the rule

¹ Romans xii. 2: "And be not conformed to this world . . ."

of sin, and, as a consequence, in the kingdom of Satan; only Christ can enable it to leave this kingdom, by virtue of His Redemption (Col. i. 13, 14; 1 Peter i. 18, 19, etc.). Hence the priest before baptising an adult or an infant commands the devil to come out: "Exi ab eo, immunde spiritus et da locum Spiritui Sancto Paraclito."

II

How does the prince, the god of this evil world, exercise his power?

First—and this is a matter of common knowledge—he does so within individual psychology, through the spiritual effect he has on each of us. He is the tempter, the seducer, the perfidious counsellor, the inspirer of evil actions. He deceives, he blinds, he corrupts (John viii. 44; xiii. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Acts v. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10; 1 Cor. vii. 5; 1 John iii. 12). He makes the false seem true and evil seem good by "transforming himself into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). It is he who plucks the divine seed from the hearts where it had been sown: who sows the tares in the Father's field (Matthew xiii. 19, 39).¹ Homicide, hatred, lying, are his "works"; he is "the father" of murderers and cheats, of those who do not love their brethren, and in general of all sinners whatsoever (John viii. 40, 41, 44, 55; 1 John iii. 8, 10, 12).

His rule, however, is not despotic: it has to have the acquiescence of the people concerned. He cannot use force: he can only propose, suggest, persuade and cajole. In Eden he gives Eve reasons for transgressing the commands of God (Gen. iii. 4, 5, 13). just as later, in the wilderness, he is to tempt Christ with the promise of universal dominion (Matt. iv. 9; Luke iv. 5, 7).

Unfortunately, he has his fifth column within the individual soul to which he lays siege. This fifth column is nature as she now is, and has been ever since he caused her to fall from her state of integrity: and he well knows how to exploit her instincts and passions. Anger, if indulged in, gives him a free hand. "Let not the sun go down upon your anger," says St. Paul; "give not place to the devil" (Eph. iv. 26, 27). The incontinent flesh, again, gives him his opportunity (1 Cor. vii. 5): so, of course, does

¹ We do not explain philosophically the possibility and the manner of this action of one spirit on others. Theologians all agree that it affects inferior faculties directly: senses, imagination, instincts, passions; and affects the will and the intelligence only by repercussion. Cf. St. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 111.

pride (1 Tim. iii. 6). But strengthened by the power of God, the Christian can "stand against the deceits of the devil" (Eph. vi. 11).

But we have not said enough when we have pointed out that Satan is not the sole cause of sin, which in the last resort is the choice of the individual free will: we must go further and emphasise that it is not his influence alone which is at work in the preliminaries of sin. He tempts, but concupiscence also tempts (Jas. i. 14): a push from within combines with the efforts of the tempter without.

All this is undeniable. But, having admitted it, one may go on to ask a further question, which cannot perhaps be answered so easily: does the spirit of evil play a part always and universally in the sin of man? Are all wrongs committed at his instigation? The parable of the sower certainly appears to teach the opposite, for besides the case where the good grain is caught away by the devil, it mentions others, where the grain perishes because it has fallen in shallow earth—a symbol of the shallowness and inconstancy of man—or because thorns, standing for the "cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches", are choking it (Matt. xiii. 19 ff.; Mark iv. 15 ff.; Luke viii. 12 ff.).

If we turn to Catholic theology, we find the same view expressed by St. Thomas, its best qualified representative: "*Non omnia peccata committuntur diabolo instigante, sed quaedam ex libertate arbitrii et carnis corruptione*".¹

Nevertheless, on reading certain texts of the New Testament or of the Desert Fathers, one gets the impression of a general superintendence exercised by the prince of this world over all the evil which is committed in it. Let us re-read, for example, the passages we quoted above dealing with the devil as the father of all the wicked: "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John iii. 8).² According to St. John (Gospel and Epistles), and St. Paul, Satan's empire, which Jesus came to overthrow, is that of evil, of all the moral evil which ravages humanity.³ St. Augustine gives the

¹ *Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 114, art. 3.

² Similarly, in the parable of the tares, the wicked ones are the sons of the devil.

³ In the last request of the Lord's Prayer, against what do we implore divine protection? In the expression "a malo (ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ)", is the noun neuter or masculine? Should we translate "deliver us from evil" or "from the Evil One"? Although, in the New Testament, the word is sometimes neuter (Luke vi. 45; Rom. xii. 9), here "the Greek Fathers, the most ancient Roman Fathers and several liturgies are strongly in favour of the masculine". The construction demands the same. The

name "city of the devil" to the city of sin which is opposed to the City of God, and which is born of the rejection of God: "Una est Dei, altera diaboli",¹ "terrenam scilicet [fecit] amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei".² And we know that Catholic ascetics and mystics looked on the devil as the author of temptation in general, and as the instigator of all sin.

It is true that most, if not all, of the scriptural and patristic texts in question are capable of a less precise interpretation: namely, that Satan, as the first rebel, is the ancestor of all sinners, and that having brought about original sin and thereby introduced disorder and concupiscence into human nature, he is, indirectly, the cause of all faults arising out of it. This is the interpretation accepted by St. Thomas.³ We may, then, leave the question open.

III

So far, and excepting perhaps this last consideration, we have presented ideas which are familiar to all Christians and which form part of common catechetical teaching. We now come to something less well known, which nevertheless evolves logically and necessarily from what has gone before. If Satan influences individual decisions, he thereby extends his power over the collective. And indeed who, if not the individual, stirs up dissensions, wars, social upheavals, oppression and persecution? It is quite clear that Satan, thus inspiring the individual, can bring about domestic or social calamity; and it was not without due thought that Dostoievski gave the title *The Possessed* to the book in which he described one such character; for such *are* possessed; not in the strict sense described in the Ritual, but invaded by demonic impulses and dominated by the thoughts and desires of Satan, so that they become his very real instruments.

Such cases are described in Scripture. The Sabeans and Chaldeans who steal the cattle and camels of Job and who put his servants to the sword are sent by Satan, who has obtained God's

last and penultimate requests are closely linked and form an antithesis: "and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the tempter" (PLUMMER, *Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 103). In this case the Evil One would be designated as the author of all temptation and the cause of all the wrong a Christian could commit.

¹ *De Civitate Dei*, xxi, c. 1.

² *Ibid.*, xiv, c. 18; MIGNÉ, vol. xli.

³ *loc. cit.*

permission to ruin the holy man (Job 1). In the Gospel our Lord reveals to Simon Peter that Satan has claimed the apostles, to sift them like wheat (Luke xxii. 31)—an allusion to the triumph of the wicked at the time of the Passion, which was to terrify the apostles and cause their desertion: no doubt an allusion also to the persecutions awaiting them individually in the future. The dissensions which rend Christendom are, in St. Paul's eyes, the work of the devil, and when he speaks of them he goes on to express the hope that "the God of peace" will promptly intervene to put an end to them and "crush Satan" beneath the feet of the faithful (Rom. xvi. 20). Twice the apostle wanted to come to Thessalonica, but "Satan hath hindered us" (1 Thess. ii. 18). In the same way our modern missionaries attribute to the devil the human obstacles which impede their task. The Apocalypse is full of visions of general catastrophes unleashed by Satan and the infernal spirits whom he rules. It is a "synagogue of Satan" established in Smyrna which blasphemes against the Christians in that town, and it is Satan in person who "will cast some of you into prison" (Apoc. ii. 9, 10). The "Beast who climbs from the bottomless pit"—that is to say, from hell—wars against the prophets of God and puts them to death (Apoc. ix). "The Beast who climbs from the sea"¹ symbolises an earthly power whose seat is "in the Eastern Mediterranean"²—the persecuting Roman Empire. This power is the instrument of the "great dragon . . . that old serpent who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world", and communicates his power to the Beast (Apoc. xiii. 1, 2; cf. xii. 9). Other scourges are let loose by the same Satanic influences: four evil angels are freed from their chains, and at once an infernal cavalry passes over the earth and a third of mankind perishes (Apoc. ix. 15 ff.; see also xiii. 1 ff.; xx. 7 ff.). Behind the visible faces of individuals whose wickedness causes havoc throughout whole human communities, there lurk beings still more sinister and more mysterious—Satan and his angels.

IV

Can one go still further and attribute to evil spirits power over physical nature? The authors of the Bible do not hesitate to do so.

¹ The same as the preceding beast, according to ALLO, *Commentaire sur l'Apocalypse*, p. 184.

² Ibid., p. 185.

These spirits, who belong properly to hell, are nevertheless not confined there. They are not by any means strangers to our world. On the contrary, they inhabit certain parts of it—for instance, the atmosphere, “heaven”; not the heaven of God, but the upper regions of the air. St. Paul calls Satan “prince of the power of this air”, of “these spirits of wickedness in the high places” (Eph. ii and vi. 12). Jesus also says that when the devil is cast out of a man he wanders restlessly in places without water (Luke xi. 24). In the Book of Job Satan testifies that he has “gone round about the earth and walked through it” (Job i and ii). (The Prayer to St. Michael, prescribed by Leo XIII for recital after Mass, calls upon the Archangel, in words reminiscent of the Apocalypse, to “drive down to hell . . . the wicked spirits who wander through the world”.)

Since, then, they are present in the universe, the devils have the power to modify its elements. The desert wind which overthrew the house of Job’s children and crushed them beneath its ruins was the work of Satan: so was the lightning which struck the patriarch’s flocks and shepherds (Job i). The devils are not content with attacking souls: they also attack bodies. The leprosy which devoured Job and covered him with sores was also their doing (Job ii). The thorn which tormented St. Paul, and which most exegetists interpret as a physical ailment, had been thrust into his flesh by “an angel of Satan” (2 Cor. xii. 7). A public and scandalous sinner, the incestuous man of Corinth, was delivered to the devil by the apostle “for the destruction of the flesh” (1 Cor. v. 5; cf. 1 Tim. i. 20). The Gospel also openly designates devils as the cause of certain physical diseases. These diseases are sometimes complicated by actual possession: but not always. The crippled woman, for instance, whom Jesus cured, was not possessed: she was in the power of a “spirit of infirmity”; “Satan had bound her”, “neither could she look upwards at all” (Luke xiii. 11). In the epileptic child, Satan gave no sign of his presence unless it were the attacks themselves (Matt. xvii. 14; Mark ix. 17; Luke ix. 39). The dumb man (Matt. ix. 32) and the blind mute (Matt. xii. 22) were similar cases, although their infirmities were of diabolical origin.¹ On the other hand, the

¹ M. J. Smit, Professor at the Archiepiscopal Seminary of Utrecht (*De Daemoniacis in Historia Evangelica*, Rome, Biblical Institute, 1913), believes that those cases of disease (blindness, dumbness, etc.) where the devil is said to be *within* the patient, are cases of possession. I do not agree. A diabolical presence whose only result is

maniac in the country of the Gerasenes was indwelt by spirits who spoke in their own name, recognising Jesus as the Son of God and their master (Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; cf. Matt. viii. 28, who speaks of two men in this state).

With this last episode is connected the story of the swine into which our Lord permitted the expelled devil to enter, causing them to rush madly into the sea. This account has shocked many modern readers. And yet for anyone who admits the possibility of diabolical possession it offers no particular difficulty. "If the devil," says Father Lagrange, "can exercise such power over a reasonable creature, there can be no objection to his activity among animals."¹

Finally, several liturgical rites practised by the Church presuppose the possibility of the presence or action of the devil even in inanimate elements. Salt, and above all water, are exorcised before being used in baptism: "Exorcizo te creatura salis. . . . Exorcizo te creatura aquae"; the devil is forbidden to exercise his evil powers over them.²

V

What is the nature of the power held throughout the world by the spirits of evil?

It is neither general nor absolute. Satan must not be made into

to alter the efficient functioning of physical organs is not necessarily possession, of which the characteristic signs are very different. On the other hand, the same author admits that the crippled woman was not possessed (cf. pp. 179-80). That case, at least, seems therefore indisputable. It is hardly necessary to recall that the writers of the Gospels distinguish between simple illnesses and possessions, whether or not accompanied by illness, and between Christ's power to cure and His power of exorcism. Among the crowds who implore His help there are sick people *and* possessed people. See, for example, Mark i. 32, 34; Luke vi. 18.

¹ *Commentaire sur l'Evangile de Saint-Marc*, p. 133. The Anglican exegetist Plummer (op. cit., p. 228) writes: "There is nothing in our experience which prevents us from believing that evil spirits could react upon brute beasts; and science admits that it has no *a priori* objection to such a hypothesis."

² "Tibi igitur praecipio, omnis spiritus immunde, omne phantasma, omne mendacium, eradicare et effugare ab hac creatura aquae. . . ." (Benediction of the baptismal water on days other than Holy Saturday and Saturday in Pentecost). "Procul ergo hinc, jubente te, Domine, omnis spiritus immundus abscedat: procul tota nequitia diabolicae fraudis abstinet. Nihil hic loci habeat contrariae virtutis admixtio: non insidiando circumvolet, non latendo subrepat, non inficiendo corrumpat. Sit haec sancta et innocens creatura, libera ab omni impugnatoris incursu et totius nequitiae purgata discessu. (Benediction of the baptismal water on Holy Saturday.) And the Church maintains that the elements—water, salt, candles, etc.—so exorcised and blessed, have the power to expel the devil from wherever they are placed. ("Ordo ad faciendam aquam benedictam. Benedictio candelarum." *Rituale Romanum*, Tit. viii. cs. 2 and 3.)

a rival of God, into something like personified Evil—"existential" Evil, one might say, opposed to the infinite and subsisting Good, which is God. That would be Manichaeism. Pure and total evil does not exist; even in fallen souls there is some good—their splendid nature which came from the hand of God, and which survives under the ugliness of sin and hatred.

Nor is Satan the unique and universal originator of all the evil committed in this world.¹ We have seen that in addition to him, and only too often collaborating with him, there is human freedom, fallible by nature, and as capable of giving way to the attraction of evil as of resisting it. Moreover, in the moral field, demoniacal influence is not compelling: in the last analysis man himself is always responsible for his sin.

This diabolical influence can nevertheless be called constant in the sense that, apart from a very exceptional privilege, nobody escapes it completely. Whether or not there are faults attributable to freedom alone, the teaching both of Revelation and the liturgy leaves no doubt that, at some moment or other, he who "goeth about" to undo us (1 Pet. v. 8) will reach us with his shafts. Interior diabolical temptations are the common lot; they form part of the ordinary experience of humanity.

But apart from these there is no trace in the Bible of a general

¹ One would simply be deluding oneself if one were to seek the ultimate answer to the problem of evil in diabolical interventions on earth. There are here two quite distinct subjects, the second of which is much wider than the first, and dominates it. The fall of Satan and his subsequent rôle are facts, simply facts, told us by Revelation; but they do not bring, or claim to bring, any solution to the problem of evil in general. Instead of replacing this problem, still less of solving it, they make us tackle it: they force us into the field of speculation. The action of the evil spirits and the very existence of their malice are only particular aspects of a problem which torments many minds; of a scandal which, as we well know, often calls a halt to their journey towards faith. How is it possible that any creature, originally good, so made by the hands of God, should become perverted? And more generally, where does the physical and moral evil come from, in the creation of a good God? Whether or not it proceeds, on this earth, from satanic influences, it remains what it is, and the scandal it causes is the same. A Kierkegaard, a Karl Barth, who regard all the work of intelligence and reasoning as a sacrilegious intrusion on revelation, might perhaps here quote the saying attributed to Tertullian: "Credo quia absurdum." Catholic tradition does not teach us this cult of the irrational. Philosophy and metaphysics are not cast out, but rather used when needed. We know that for a long time the speculative problem of evil checked the young Augustine on the way to conversion (*Confessions*, iii, 7 (12); v, 10 (20)), and that the highly metaphysical solution of this problem enabled him to dissociate himself for good from Manichaeism. It is therefore going a little far to treat this solution as a dialectical "fraud", by which "religious minds" could hardly be duped. (LOUIS BOUYER, *Le problème du mal dans le christianisme antique*, in the review *Dieu Vivant* (1946), No. 6, p. 18.) Is not St. Augustine himself a "religious mind"?

assignment received by Satan to trouble and torment mortals as he pleases. He may be "prince of this world" in the sense that we have described, but he is not master of events. He could do nothing, in any order, without divine permission. In the physical order, the scriptural examples we have mentioned are proof enough. Satan can attack Job only after having obtained special authorisation from God. The angel of Satan who strikes St. Paul by inflicting a humiliating disease on him has been sent by God to prevent the Apostle from taking pride in his revelations (2 Cor. xii. 7).¹

Thus the devil's interventions in the material realm are always particular, occasional, limited to special circumstances. They are of two kinds, corresponding to miracle and Providence on the divine side. Just as there are divine miracles, operated by the sovereign Power who modifies at will the elements and laws of His creation, so there are diabolical signs and wonders,² accomplished by the use of natural laws and elements, but in a way which surpasses the powers of man and nature in the ordinary course of things. An actual type of these marvels would be, for example, possession proper, when the devil makes use of human lips to articulate the sounds of a language unknown to the victim. Secondly, just as divine foreknowledge, without making a breach in the world's normal course, orders natural circumstances to its ends of love and justice—for example, to answer a prayer or to chastise—so certain events, quite ordinary in their appearance and their inmost structure—an illness, a storm, a failure—may be brought about, for evil ends, by a diabolical intervention which can insert itself into the web of things, as can human liberty. But fundamentally, these two kinds of diabolical intervention are not essentially different; the evil spirit always acts in the same manner: not as absolute master, but by using according to their nature things which he is unable to modify—by grouping certain elements, for example, and by arranging the coincidence of apparently fortuitous circumstances.³

¹ Cf. above, p. 46.

² The apparition of anti-Christ is "according to the working of Satan, in all powers and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9; Matt. xxiv. 24).

³ That is why St. Thomas teaches that there are no true miracles, in the full and proper sense, apart from the divine miracles (*Summa Theologica*, par. 1, q. 114, art. 4).

VI

What may we conclude from this chapter of theological demonology? That those who attribute to the devil calamities of natural appearance and structure are perhaps not always entirely wrong. Diabolical action not being a matter of general occurrence, it is indeed difficult to know with certainty when it is taking place, *hic et nunc*. But whenever it seems possible, if not likely, in a given case, we are authorised to use supernatural methods to protect the victims. The Church asks us to do so. Besides exorcism properly so called, which is reserved exclusively to those possessed, she has prayers and rites applicable to all human miseries, and she does not omit to mention him who may be the author of them, if not wholly and directly (as in possession), at least partially, and in a leading capacity. Holy water is expressly blessed to keep away from the places and persons on which it is sprinkled "all the power of the enemy and the enemy himself with his apostate angels". It is the same with blessed salt. Non-sacramental oil is blessed and "exorcised" so that the sick may be anointed with it and delivered from "all languor and infirmity, all the insidious attacks of the enemy and from all adversity". The benediction of the sick begins with the prayer: "Effugiat ex hoc loco omnis nequitia daemonum". The daily prayer at Compline asks God to keep away "all the snares of the enemy" from the house in which those praying will sleep. We need only look through the Ritual to find a great number of prayers and ceremonies with the same aim, applied to various objects and places, and containing the same formula against the wiles of Satan: the benediction of bread, of a fountain, of a well, of an oven, etc. Finally, "the exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels" (which is sometimes called "the little exorcism", and which is not, properly speaking, an exorcism at all since it does not apply to those possessed), prescribed by Leo XIII, aims at protecting the Church and the faithful from all attacks, torments and open or hidden persecutions threatening them, of which Satan is explicitly declared to be the instigator.

If, then, popular beliefs about the devil swarm with superstitions, puerile legends and unverified, unverifiable rumours, they nevertheless contain some grain of truth; they have a distant

foundation in the Bible: a deformed tradition, perhaps, and overgrown with erroneous accretions, but by no means entirely false or wholly to be rejected. In this strange mixture some remnants of Christian doctrines can be discerned.

Yet we must not allow this careful and partial concession to lead us to another extreme. Nobody in his senses, we hope, will think that the point of view here explained should eclipse all others, to the point of becoming unique, complete and exclusive. It would be madness to rely solely on prayers and religious rites to obviate all ills—for example, to treat illnesses with exclusively supernatural remedies. We have elsewhere discussed, and condemned, the opinion of certain visionaries who see in the inhabitants of asylums nothing but cases of pure possession curable only through exorcism.¹ Even if diabolical influences do have a part in some event, that does not mean that other causes—normal, human, natural—cease to function. Indeed, we have seen that the evil spirit makes use of them. If, then, we are able to break his instrument or to wear it out by methods in the same order as his own, we shall have won a victory over him.

JOSEPH DE TONQUÉDEC, S.J.

¹*Les Maladies nerveuses ou mentales et les manifestations diaboliques*, pp. 203-4.

ANGEL OR MONSTER?

The Power of Evil in the Old Testament

THE SCENE of our Lord's temptations was among the beasts in the desert (Mark i. 3). The leader of the forces of evil—Satan, the devil—was in combat with Jesus, whose servants are the angels. The salvation of man was at stake. The prince of devils, the prince of this world, was the ruler of the kingdom of death; the Author of life had come to take away his ill-gotten power over the kings of the earth (John xii. 31; Acts iii. xv; Heb. ii. 14; Apoc. i. 5).

It is hard to believe in Christ the Redeemer without at the same time believing in his antagonist, the devil. We try to get round the difficulty, none the less. Cannot this inconvenient character be relegated to the category of the theatrical mask? Semitic poetry and the popular imagination have a way of personifying the forces of nature, psychic forces included—the whole thing is simply a dramatic conceit. . . . What, we ask, is the truth behind the images? Jesus and the apostles borrowed these literary properties from the Old Testament, possibly even from the Apocrypha or the Gnosis. They had to speak the language their compatriots were used to. We must translate it into the terms of today: it would be treachery to our Master to present His thought to the modern mind in language which has fallen into disuse.

The aim of the present essay is to throw some light on the character of this language. Jesus used the religious vocabulary of His people which has come down to us in the Bible: a quick survey of the Old Testament will make it easier for us to understand the words and images in which He spoke.

THE BEAST

The Beasts in the Desert

The proud citadel of sin is reduced to waste land:

"And that Babylon, glorious among kingdoms, the famous pride of the Chaldeans, shall be even as the Lord destroyed

Sodom and Gomorrha. It shall no more be inhabited for ever, and it shall not be founded unto generation and generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tents there, nor shall shepherds rest there. But wild beasts shall rest there, and their houses shall be filled with serpents, and ostriches shall dwell there, and the hairy ones shall dance there: And owls shall answer one another there, in the houses thereof, and sirens in the temples of pleasures" (Isa. xiii. 19-22).

We come on this kind of description everywhere in the Prophets. Isaias (xxxiv. 11) and Sophonias (ii. 14) both saw similar beasts prowling in the ruins of Nineveh. Desolate Babylon is the home of more of them (Isa. xiii. 21, 22.; Jer. l. 39). Later on in Edom—type of the nations banded against Israel—we find dozens of them. Dogs and wild cats, screech-owls and crows and other creatures harder to identify, hold a demoniac sabbath in the land of Edom which, deserted and burnt down, has gone back to the primeval chaos (Isa. xxxiv).

How are we to interpret this horde of horrors? Crows and vultures are in place on a field of carnage. The jackal and the ostrich, renowned for the mournfulness of their cries, give the idea of keening (Mic. i. 8; Job xxx. 29). Many of the animals are picked from the list of impure or forbidden beasts, those that are loathsome to Yahweh (Lev. xi. 14-18; Deut. xiv. 13-17). The picture is one of sadness and desolation, filth and sin.

It is more surprising to find Lilith and the satyrs. Lilith was the name of a famous Babylonian female demon. The satyrs (*se'irim*, "hairy ones", goats) are well translated *devils* in the Vulgate; we know, besides, that people offered them idolatrous sacrifices (Lev. xvii. 7). This repulsive, death-dealing crew—to which popular imagination adds yet more and viler monsters—suggests a saraband of devils, dancing in the ruins, filling the night with weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The reason is that the desert is the home of sin. Assisting at the purification of Jerusalem restored, Zacharias saw Impiety being carried off to Babylon, where a throne was built for it. In the ritual of the Levites, it is to the desert that they chase the scape-goat and the sparrow covered with the lepers' filth (Lev. xvi. 10-21; xiv. 7). The animals of the desert, both real and fabulous, are in the Bible the symbols of sin, dismal and deformed.

The Ravages of Disease

Another class of demons attacks the flesh of man. These beasts are invisible, but the damage they do is tangible. They are in need of bodies to infect.

The Babylonian magic figurines show us what the ancient East supposed diseases to look like. An example is Pazuzu, the south-west wind which carries malaria: on top of a naked, exaggeratedly thin body is a monstrous head with goat's horns on the forehead. Four wings and the claws of a beast of prey indicate the speed with which it dives down on its victim, plunging sharp nails into his flesh. "I am Pazuzu, son of Hanpa," says the inscription, "king of the evil spirits of the air. I swoop with violence from the mountains, spreading fever as I go." The elements of the demon fauna seen on the talisman plaques are crabs and scorpions, lions and panthers, reptiles and beasts of prey.¹

The Bible uses analogous language. The author of the ninetyeth psalm urges the Israelite to trust in the protection of the Most High; if he does he will survive the most horrifying epidemics: ". . . thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night. Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business [plague] that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noon-day devil [disease]" (Ps. xc. 5-6).

The old Latin version said "the noon-day devil". In this connection Father Calès says: "One might regard the plague (*déber*) that walks by night and the contagion (*qétéb*) that kills at midday as two demons, one of the night, the other of the day, who according to the popular beliefs of the ancient East, were responsible for epidemic diseases." The believer has nothing to fear from these maleficent beings. With angels to guard him he can spurn the asp and the basilisk, the lion and the dragon. These are the same beasts that were represented on the amulets of Babylon.

In Israel magic is forbidden. All scourges come from the hand of God. We see them in His bodyguard when He comes to judge the earth (Hab. iii. 5). They are tools for the carrying out of His tremendous plans: "They shall be consumed with famine and birds shall devour them with a most bitter bite: I will send the

¹ G. CONTENAU, *Manuel d'Archéologie orientale*, fig. 826, pp. 1310 ff.; see fig. 152 ff., pp. 1306-10; fig. 829, p. 1316; fig. 830, p. 1320; fig. 1038, pp. 1913 ff.

teeth of beasts upon them, with the fury of creatures that trail upon the ground, and of serpents. I will heap evils upon them and will spend my arrows among them" (Deut. xxxii. 23-4).

Later theology sings the praises of these instruments of divine justice: "Fire, hail, famine and death, all these were created for vengeance. The teeth of beasts, the scorpions, and serpents, and the sword taking vengeance upon the ungodly unto destruction. In his commandments they shall feast, and they shall be ready upon earth when need is, and when their time is come they shall not transgress his word" (Ecclus. xxxix. 35-7).

Are these terrifying creatures mere personifications or are they really evil demons? That is a question we must come back to later, only pausing here to point out that in the psalter the distressed man pleading for justice denounces his all-too-concrete persecutors under the form of diabolical beasts: "Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears. . . . God shall break in pieces their teeth in their mouth: the Lord shall break the grinders of the lions" (Ps. lvii. 5, 7).

The Phantom of Death

More fearful even than these poison-toothed diseases is their father, Death, the king of all horrors. The author of the Book of Job gives a picture of the agony of the ungodly man: "Fears shall terrify him on every side, and shall entangle his feet. Let his strength be wasted with famine, and let hunger invade his ribs. Let it devour the beauty of his skin, let the first-born death consume his arms. Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle and let destruction tread upon him like a king" (Job xviii. 11-14).

"This personage," says Mgr. Weber, "calls to mind the god of the mythological underworld. . . . The poet can indulge in these allusions without endangering the reader's faith." This is no more than a personification as in the lament of the weeping women: ". . . death is come up through our windows, it is entered into our houses . . ." (Jer. ix. 21).

Sheol (Hades, hell) the kingdom of Death, the haunt of the dead, is also spoken of as a person. All we see of him is an insatiable gullet: "Therefore hath hell enlarged her soul, and opened her mouth without any bounds" (Isa. v. 14). He swallows people up, he engulfs them. He it was who ate Dathan, Core and

Abiron alive; he swallowed the army of Pharaoh when the earth opened beneath it (Num. xvi. 30-4; Exod. xv. 12).

The Abyss (*tehom*), the liquid element underneath and all round the earth, is as greedy a monster as Sheol and has a lot in common with him. He, too, is one of the Powers of Death—the victim cries to God in his distress: “Draw me out of the mire, that I may not stick fast: deliver me from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the tempest of waters drown me, nor the deep swallow me up: and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me” (Ps. lxxviii. 15-16).

The gulf and the gaping well are symbols of Sheol. Often Sheol and the Abyss turn up side by side: “The sorrows of death surrounded me: and the torments of iniquity [Calès: Belial] troubled me. The sorrows of hell [Calès: Sheol] encompassed me and the snares of death prevented me” (Ps. xvii. 15, 16).

Sheol under the ground is like the belly of a vast octopus with waterfalls for tentacles: “. . . they sunk as lead in the mighty waters. . . . Thou stretchedst forth thy hand, and the earth swallowed them” (Exod. xv. 10, 12).

These tentacles are so strong that they can snatch down a boat from the high rim of the rock of Tyre: “I . . . shall bring the deep upon thee, and many waters shall cover thee. . . . I shall bring thee down with those that descend into the pit” (Ezech. xxvi. 19-20).

Worse still, there was so much water in the abyss that it spread all over the earth and the darkness gathered round it like a cloak (Gen. i. 2; Ps. ciii. 6).

Whatever name we give this greedy monster—Death, Sheol, the Abyss, Abaddon (perdition), Belial (nothing, nirvana) or anything else—the point is, what, if any, is his connection with the demoniac beings we have been speaking about?

The diseases, naturally enough, are the servants of Death; the text from Job cited earlier showed the King of Horrors cheering on his pack. In Osee plague (*déber*) and contagious fever (*qétèb*) are called Death's weapons. Death is the hub of the evil powers, uniting them to make an organised empire. One can treat with it as with a person: the impious make bargains with Death and hell (Isa. xxviii 15, 18; Wisd. i. 16)—who are as greedy as any person could be to batten on the unfortunate (Hab. i. 13; ii. 5; Prov. i. 12).

Thus the power of the nether regions takes on a moral and religious character: it stands out against God. Creative activity struggles with the Abyss. One word is enough to rout it—one utterance from Yahweh reduces the adversary to silence. The verb *gaar* (like its Greek equivalent—*epitimán*) has the special meaning of a shout of battle, of triumph over the powers of evil. This shout puts to flight the Abyss and the towering waters, as well as the enemy hordes (Isa. xvii. 13; l. 2). It repels Satan himself: "Imperet tibi Dominus" (Zach. iii. 2).¹ Elsewhere we find the battle described in greater detail:

"There went up a smoke in his wrath: and a fire flamed from his face: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he ascended upon the cherubim, and he flew upon the wings of the winds. And he made darkness his cover, his pavilion round about him: dark waters in the clouds of the air. At the brightness that was before him the clouds passed, hail and coals of fire. And he sent forth his arrows, and he scattered them: he multiplied lightning, and troubled them. Then the fountains of waters appeared, and the foundations of the world were discovered: At thy rebuke, O Lord, at the spirit of thy wrath" (Ps. xvii. 9-16).

One is reminded at once of the war between Marduk and Tiamat.² In point of fact there is no mention of Tiamat in the Bible and the philological connection with *tehom* is not strong enough to make a literary link with the Babylonian myth. Other monsters of the liquid element have the names Rahab and Leviathan—these names, also found at Ras-Shamra, suggest a Canaanite or Phoenician origin.

These fabulous dragons represented the great empires. Speaking of the exodus from Egypt, Isaias (li) recalls the old victory of Yahweh over Rahab. The allusion may be to the sea that divided to let the Israelites through, but Lower Egypt itself, with all its marshes and canals, is a power of the sea: the crocodiles on the Nile were to furnish Job with a portrait of the Leviathan, and in poetry Rahab is a name for Egypt (Ps. lxxxvi). In other places we find the dragon of Bel³ which swallowed up the people of

¹ In the New Testament Jesus uses this word to command the sea, the demons and St. Peter when He calls him Satan (Mark i. 25; iv. 39; viii. 33; ix. 24). See P. JOUON, *Biblica*, 6 (1925), 318-21.

² R. LABAT, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris, 1935), plate iv and pp. 52-6.

³ G. CONTENAU, *op. cit.*, fig. 137.

Israel, symbolising Nabuchodonosor himself (Jer. li. 34, 44; cf. Jonas ii).

These images go back a long way. Isaias (xxviii. 15, 18) called the alliance which the counsellors of Ezechias brought about with Egypt a league with Death, a covenant with hell. He described the Assyrian invasion as a vast flood of water (viii. 7; xxviii. 15, 18; cf. Ps. xlv).

Death, the Abyss, Nothingness: these are the enemies of God and His people. Yet they, too, are in the Creator's hands. It was God Himself who enveloped the earth in the Abyss, who swaddled the sea in darkness on the day of its birth (Job xxxviii. 8 ff.; Ps. ciii. 6). He created the Leviathan as a toy for His children (Ps. ciii. 26; Job xl. 24). God sends those whom He wishes down into the belly of Sheol and takes them back when He chooses (Jonas ii; Ps. lxxxvii; 1 Kings ii. 6), just as He sent His people down into Egypt and took them out again on the day of salvation.

The Demoniactal Beasts

What order of reality do these beasts belong to? The dolefully howling jackal, the scorpion that strikes in the dark, the sea with its perils and monsters, are very real creatures indeed. Are their repulsive faces masks that hide invisible beings, demons of impurity, disease and death? What light do the sacred writings throw on this?

Towards the second century, when the Jews were translating their sacred books into Greek, they used the word *daimonia*, demoniac beings, for idols and pagan gods and also for several of the fantastic animals named above.¹

Ought we to conclude from this that Death and Pestilence and Sin had a kind of separate existence in the eyes of the Jews? Even if not actual personalities endowed with a will for evil, are they maleficent energies, comparable with animals whose movements are dictated by instinct? A man in the clutches of these beasts of prey falls ill or dead or into sin, but it is possible to chase the vile things far from the homes of men, out into the desert, down into Sheol.

¹ Note that the LXX prefers the neuter adjective *daimonia*, demoniac beings, to the usual masculine noun, *daimôn*, demon. At one point the New Testament uses *daimones* (Matt. viii. 31) parallel with *daimonia* (Luke viii. 30 ff.) and "impure spirits" (Mark v. 10-13); there the demons have a more definite personal character. For the use of the word in classic Greek, see DAREMBERG-SAGLIO, PAULY-WISSOWA, *Encyclopædias*, suppl. iii, and G. SOURY, *La démonologie de Plutarque* (Paris, 1932).

To the modern mind, sin and sickness and death have no existence apart from the sinner, the sick man, the corpse. The ancient East had a different way of looking at things. There is no doubt, for example, that for Babylon Pazuzu, Labartu, the Seven Evil Ones and the other deathly monsters were real—the magic texts can be interpreted no other way. Was it the same in Jerusalem?

Superstitious practices were mixed in with the religion of the people; the Law and the Prophets witness to that. The Israelites were prone to share the popular belief in the forces of evil, but they cannot have had very clear ideas as to their nature. But what of the pure religion which the Biblical texts reflect, the religion that is the only mouthpiece of revelation—did it contrive to find a place for them in its pattern? Magic and idolatry alike were forbidden. Monotheism precluded the existence of anything not created by God and all the works of God are good. The Book of Wisdom says explicitly: "God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. For he created all things that they might be: and he made the nations of the world for health: and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor kingdom of hell upon the earth" (i. 13-14). It is a faithful echo of the first chapter of Genesis.

Then are Death and his offspring the diseases to be relegated to the dream-world of symbolic language? The texts forbid us to come to any such definite conclusion. Death is only a personification; the Bible, anxious to avoid dualism, refrains from making the power of evil into the antithesis of God. When we come to the mythical monsters Rahab and Leviathan, hesitation has already begun to set in. Fr. Lagrange thought that "these were certainly both real and terrible in the sacred writers' eyes. They struggled with God in the beginning—a prefiguring of the fallen angels' battle".¹ As for fever and the other maleficent beings, the official religion did not have to combat them with the same energy. They were no great danger, as long as men did not fight them with magic but prayed to God instead, beating their breasts and crying for mercy. Yet under the animal hides one increasingly tends to discover no blind instinctive power but a will, good or evil, a spirit, an angel.

¹ *Rev. Bibl.* (1916), p. 598.

THE ANGEL

The Powers of Heaven

Passing now to the world of angels, we meet again vast natural forces, but instead of chthonian and abysmal powers we find the powers of heaven.

On the day of creation "The morning stars praised me together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody" (Job xxxviii. 7).

The heavenly army fought for Israel against Jericho (Joshua v. 14) and against Sisara: "War from heaven was made against them, the stars remaining in their order and courses fought against Sisara" (Judges v. 20).

When Yahweh appears as a warrior to confound His enemies or save His loyal subjects, He has round Him all the armies of heaven (Ps. xvii, quoted earlier). So He appeared on Sinai (Exod. xix. 16-20) and at the going out of Egypt (Ps. lxxvi. 17 ff.)—even earlier, at the Creation, we read: "Who makest the clouds thy chariot: who walkest upon the wings of the winds. Who makest thy angels spirits: and thy ministers a burning fire" (Ps. ciii. 3-4).

Cherubim and whirling flame stand guard at the entrance of the garden of God (Gen. iii. 24) and in His palaces the heavenly powers chorus His praises (Ps. cxlviii).

These powers are essentially good, even when God uses them for the destruction of His enemies. Are they capable of becoming evil? There are several allusions in Job to the defects which God finds even in the stars, even in His angels (Job iv. 18; xv. 15; xxv. 5). These do not necessarily refer to the fall of the angels: the formula is a general one—there is imperfection inherent in every created thing, even creatures who dwell in heaven. In the Book of Isaias (xiv. 12-14) the fall of the king of Babylon is pictured as the fall of a star (Lucifer); there are signs of literary poaching here, from the fall of Enlil. Similarly the destruction of the city is described as being like the collapse of Bel (Marduk) and Nabo (Isa. xlvi. 1). Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any clear revelation about the fall of an angel.¹

The heavenly powers are capable of bringing about the fall of

¹ The Apocrypha fill in this gap with a wealth of imagination.

men. Spellbound by their beauty, men take these creatures for gods (Wisd. xiii. 3). This is an age-old temptation. Babylon and Canaan worshipped the stars. Even when they are hard masters for men, there is no perversion, strictly speaking, of the celestial beings themselves (Deut. iv. 9; Jer. xvi. 11-12). The fault is entirely with the men who make them into idols and it is they who must take the consequences.¹

The Spirits

When God wished Achab to be deceived, a spirit broke from the ranks of the army of heaven and offered to turn into a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets (3 Kings xxii. 22): the angels of God are instruments that carry out His will.

He sent angels of destruction against Sodom (Gen. xix. 13), against the Egyptians (Exod. xii. 23; Ps. lxxvii. 49), against Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvii. 36) and even against His own people (2 Kings xxiv. 16 ff.). Later the Book of Wisdom gives the name Destroyer to the plague that attacked the disobedient Jews in the desert (Wisd. xviii. 25). Possibly the name Asmodeus comes from the Aramaic *achmed*, to exterminate. But a mission of revenge does not necessarily suppose an evil agent—the Word of God Himself might take it over (Wisd. xviii. 15).

The spirits of temptation are more surprising: the spirit of jealousy (Num. v. 14), of ill-will (1 Kings xviii. 10), of discord (Judges ix. 23), of lying (3 Kings xxii. 22), of fornication (Os. iv. 12; v. 4).

Yet it is as envoys of God that they attack Saul, Abimelech and the Sichemites, as well as the prophets of Achab. These facts were fully accepted in ancient times—we must remember that David was not startled when the ill-will of Saul was stirred up against him by Yahweh Himself (1 Kings xxvi. 19): he, too, after all, was urged on by the anger of God to commit sin, in ordering the census of the people (2 Kings xxiv. 1).

Satan

When, a long time later, in the fourth century, the chronicler again took up the history of David's reign, he substituted Satan

¹ St. Paul sees Jews and Gentiles in subjection to the astral forces. Comparing the Mosaic Law with the rites of the pagans, he extends what Deuteronomy said of the Gentiles to the faithless Jews. But the principalities and powers are not on that account evil, any more than is the Law.

for the anger of God as the force that impelled the king to make a census of his people (1 Par. xxi. 1). Was this just a theological scruple, or was he being more accurate?

What do we know of this personage Satan? His name is full of meaning. The etymology of the Hebrew word *satan* (and of its synonym *satam*) is doubtful, but its sense is unmistakable. The verb means "to obstruct", like the angel of Yahweh that stood in Balaam's way and foiled his wicked intentions (Num. xxii. 22-32). This hostility may show itself in warfare; we find it more often in the tribunal, where the *satan* is the accuser, the calumniator, the *diabolos* (Ps. cviii; cf. Apoc. xii. 10-12).

There are human Satans, like the princes, one Edomite, the other Aramaic, whom God raised up against Solomon after he had let himself be seduced by foreign women (3 Kings xi).

The Bible has two other references to Satans who are angels. The text of Zacharias gives the precise date. On the 24th chevat, in the second year of Darius—the middle of February 520 B.C.—Zacharias had a vision in the night. Jesus (the high priest) appeared, standing before the angel of Yahweh like a man on trial in mourning garments; on his right, Satan is counsel for the prosecution. Imperet tibi Dominus!—the shout of Yahweh rings out against Satan. Jesus is vindicated and the angel makes him take back the insignia of his priesthood (Zach. iii. 1-5). Here Satan is the accuser, trying to bring about the damnation of the man God wants to save.

Most people are familiar with the other passage, the prologue to the Book of Job (chapter 1 ff.). The date is disputed—it was probably some time in the fifth century. Yahweh's consultation with the children of God is like the council He held with the army of heaven in the days of Achab. Satan is the accuser. His evil intent is obvious from the outset. His job is to find out the truth. This, no doubt, he has been told to do by God, but the idea of goodness vexes him; he does not believe in it; he does not want to believe in it. If Job remains loyal it will be from motives of self-interest: Satan throws God the challenge. He wants to put Job—and therefore God—in the wrong.

Yahweh gives him a free hand and we know the result for poor Job. From being the malevolent accuser, Satan turns tempter. All the desert demons and the diseases are at his beck and call; he even makes use of Job's wife, but he cannot manage to extract

the blasphemy that would put Job at his mercy and deliver him up to death.

Satan's purposes are revolt against God and the perdition of men. But his power has its limits. He needs God's permission to unleash the scourges of the desert and a further permission to set on the pack of diseases. There is no mention of a divine permit to make Job's wife obey him—that is the mystery of human liberty and its weakness. This mystery has its strong side, too. Satan cannot overcome a freedom that submits itself to God not through self-interest but because God is God.

THE ANGEL AND THE BEAST

The Satan of the Old Testament is an enigmatic character. He is the black sheep in the family of God, always contrary—one might say Judas among the twelve. He has not yet revealed himself as the head of the powers of evil, the god of this world standing up to the King of Heaven. But already he is hand in glove with all the evil forces: he seeks them in the depths of the desert, he knows how to find them in a woman's heart. He is not the king of horrors, the personification of death, but he is allied to death and spreads it on every side.

He it is that brought death into the world, says Wisdom, and the idea goes back to Genesis. The name Satan was not used then, but a serpent, a creature of God, the symbol of skill and prudence, slithered between the trees of Paradise, put its spell on the woman and insinuated its poison into her—and sent humanity hurtling down to death. God never cursed sinful man but the serpent is under a curse that can never be repealed.

All through the Old Testament the image of the serpent goes on being associated with temptation—and woman and the fruit of the vine are his willing tools: "Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the colour thereof shineth in the glass: it goeth in pleasantly. But in the end it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk. Thy eyes shall behold strange women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. And thou shalt be as one sleeping in the midst of the sea, and as a pilot fast asleep, when the stern is lost" (Prov. xxiii. 31-4).

What a contrast with the golden age of Messianic peace, when the Son of Jesse will inaugurate the reign of a justice and wisdom not relying on the judgment of the senses but on the spirit of

Yahweh alone; when the lion and bear will graze next the sheep and the cow, when the woman's child can put its hand in an asphole and the baby at the breast play safely with the serpent's young (Isa. xi. 1-8).

The serpent is an image used by prophets and wise men. Satan is real. A poisonous and shifty serpent, he works for the reign of death upon earth. For this end he mobilises the forces of nature and the men who betray themselves to him. God lets him go as far as His wisdom thinks fit. He uses the wickedness of Satan in the same way as He uses the wickedness of men: "You thought evil against me: but God turned it into good, that he might exalt me, as at present you see, and might save many people" (Gen. 1. 20).

THE POWER OF EVIL

The outward forms given to the powers of evil in the Old Testament are not unlike the spontaneous products of the human imagination. The nightmares of sleepless nights, the wanderings of delirium and the fear of death all give animal shape to the occult forces over which man knows himself to have no control. Psychology and comparative folklore also have something to say on the matter.

The Word of God uses human terms to reveal to man the language that is His own. The forces of death are foul beasts, the phantoms of fevered dreams. The Creator Himself battles with these monsters—what does this mean?

Theology says that God created *out of* nothing—then immediately this *out of* is corrected. The Old Testament says rather that God created *against* nothing, though here again we must not be tied down to the limitations of a phrase. The formula is rich in teaching. Sin thrusts the earth back into the depths of the abyss, reduces it to the condition of wilderness, of chaos (Isa. vi. 11; Jer. iv. 22-6), from which the act of creation had rescued it.

That is because every creature is willed by God: *Dixit et facta sunt*—but the free creature has been given the power to attain the fullness of its own reality by co-operating with the action on itself of the will of God: "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added his commandments and precepts. If thou wilt keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. He hath set water and fire before thee: stretch forth thy hand to

which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him" (Ecclus. xv. 14-18).

The divine will always fulfils its aim: a created will can fall short if it is out of line with the design of the Creator. It is sin that prevents the development of man and stops him from achieving his end—part of him is still immersed in nothingness and he falls into the toils of death. Nothingness and death have no positive value: what exists is an incomplete creature, a broken vase, a withered trunk, a building in ruins. God created the world in opposition to nothingness;¹ the free creature must create himself in opposition to sin.

The demonic animals are only images. But there are men ensnared by sin, possessed by malice, poisoned by envy against the brothers who have done better than they have. There are mobs more monstrous than Rahab, human tides hurled against the people of God by dragons as rabid as Nabuchodonosor and Pharaoh. There are even spirits never encumbered with our clay, who were created for the light and have refused it, and who long to drag us into their own darkness. These are the real diabolical powers.

In the face of these powers of evil the Old Testament leaves us to the strength of our free will, with the example of Job and the prayer of the Psalms to aid us. In the Old Testament, indeed, Satan is of very little importance; his empire has not yet been revealed. It is in the New Testament that he is shown up as the chief of the coalition of evil forces—and when he is unmasked he is seen to be defeated.²

Judas was able to remain hidden among the Twelve though for a long time he had been a Satan. By attacking his Master openly he showed himself up. The moment which he thought to be that of his triumph was that of his disintegration—*crepuit medius*. Satan, who in the Old Testament was veiled, went on attacking Christ from the desert to the Agony; at the foot of the cross he thought he had won—"If thou art the Son of God . . ." A power

¹ One might compare this, *servatis servandis*, with R. LABAT's interpretation of the Babylonian poem of the creation, op. cit., p. 67: "It is not the waters of the sea that Marduk is fighting, but the *principle of annihilation* which Tiamat represents in the world" (*italics mine*).

² "Unmask Satan and you vanquish him"—St. Ignatius's *Exercises: Discernment of Spirits*, R. 13.

of nothingness, he burst like a soap bubble, melted away like a mist before the Easter sun.

The power of evil is powerlessness. All the devil can do is only trickery and mirage. Nothingness is conquered by creation, death and sin are annihilated by the cross and the resurrection. It was by the grace of God that Jesus submitted Himself to death; by His death He brought the devil to nothing, and at the same moment set free those who all their lives had been slaves to the fear of death (Heb. ii. 9-14).

The life of the Church moves in the same rhythm. Jesus warned His apostles of it; St. Paul and St. John are full of summonses to battle and of shouts of triumph:¹ "I would have you to be wise in good, and simple in evil. And the God of peace crush Satan under your feet speedily" (Rom. xvi. 19-20).

A. LEFÈVRE, S.J.

¹ On the devil and demons in the New Testament see J. SMIT, *De demoniacis in historia evangelica* (Rome, 1913); G. KURZE, *Der Engels-und Teufelsglaube des Apostels Paulus* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1915); in Judaism, J. BONSIRVEN, *Le Judaïsme palestinien* (Paris, 1935), vol. i, pp. 239-46.

THE FALLEN ANGEL

WHAT WE call an "examination of conscience" does not usually extend beyond the province of morals. It would be instructive to carry this spiritual exercise into the realm of faith. By means of some appropriate psycho-analytical technique one would force oneself to be clearly conscious of, to make explicit, such beliefs as we really accept and live, as are the object of a positive act of faith: not the implicit and theoretical Credo but one that we truly profess, a Credo that feeds the spiritual life.

If some such practice came into general use it would soon expose some extraordinary facts. Even among the sincerest of the faithful who profess to adhere to the doctrine of the Church, their effective faith does not always tally with it. Often it is only a partial or misshapen reflection. Again, this stocktaking of our beliefs would reveal complex psychological phenomena analogous to those with which psycho-analysis has made us familiar in the sphere of the affective life. We would discover on the dogmatic plane inhibitions and complexes whose causes it would be extremely useful to find out.

If we approach the problem in hand—that of belief in the devil—from this point of view, I am convinced that this sort of analysis of faith would unearth a very common difficulty which is boggled at by most of the religious consciences of our time. Apart from professional theologians, professors whose habit it is to plod through the encyclopaedia of dogma with steady and methodical steps, and apart from those privileged souls who are so far advanced in the way of perfection and the life of the spirit that they know every aspect of it, one might say by experiment, I am certain that among the Christians of our day there are very few who *believe* really and effectively in the devil; for whom this article of faith is an active element of their religious life.

Even among those who say they are and think they are and want to be faithful to the Church's teaching, we should discover many who have no difficulty in acknowledging that they do not accept

the existence of "Satan". Others only agree to it on condition that they shall be allowed to interpret this belief symbolically, to identify the devil with evil (with the evil powers, with sin, with the perverse twist in our fallen nature), to which they give a sort of independent existence, detached from any real personality. Most people just find the theme embarrassing—you have only to look at the oratorical precautions that are taken before it is introduced, even by authors with the highest motives. Contemporary apologists and even the catechism—of recent years grown so fainthearted and scared of exaggeration—soft-pedal the subject systematically, if they refer to it at all. This embarrassment and squeamishness with which the idea of the devil's existence fills most people today, can be easily spotted in anyone who, for example, reads the Desert Fathers, who were so accustomed to the daily presence of demons.¹ Even André Gide often irks his public—Catholic and Protestant alike—with his insistence on the idea of the demon. For him it is only a mythological theme but our contemporaries hate hearing people talk about Satan, even when reduced to the status of a myth.

The motives behind this defensive attitude, for defensive it certainly is, must be looked into very carefully. It is a sore point—the conscience hates to be questioned about it and does its best to let the problem slide.

To get a clear idea of it I would suggest the application to this particular case of a simple generality. The difficulties that stand in the way of our acceptance of a belief are often accounted for by a fundamental misunderstanding of the real object of that faith. The objections we raise, which are perfectly well-founded and valid, are in reality addressed not to the article of faith but to an image of it so twisted that it has become a caricature, to a "phantom", a *phantasma*, to use a word of St. Augustine's.²

¹ Take Henri Bremond, deep as his understanding of the writings of the Egyptian desert is: ". . . there are a great many stories about devils, fewer than some people have made out, though more than one might have preferred, but less pernicious withal than one would have thought to begin with; in fact nearly all of them are edifying . . ." (Introduction to JEAN BREMOND, *Les Pères du Désert* (coll. *Les Moralistes Chrétiens*), vol. i, p. xxvii.)

² *Confessiones*, iv, 4 (g). Remember the context: at the age of eighteen or twenty St. Augustine wept at the death of his friend: "I asked my soul . . . it did not know what to reply, and if I told it to hope in God it would not obey me, and rightly; the dear friend I had lost was more real and good than the mirage in which I commanded it to hope (*quam phantasma in quod sperare jubebatur*)". Cf. also *Confessiones*, vii, c. 17 (23).

If so many of our contemporaries—I am speaking of Christians—refuse to believe in the devil, it is for the most part because they have a false idea of him that is utterly out of keeping with the essence of the truth. So much so that the violent reaction of their religious sense, their shying at this error, is not only understandable but in its way permissible.

On analysis we find that the usual modern conception of the demon is in fact rather “manichæan” than Christian (to use the traditional language of heresiology: if an historically accurate adjective is required, we could say “gnostic” or “dualist”). The Satan our contemporaries refuse to face up to, or only with difficulty bring themselves to acknowledge, is a sort of Ahriman, a personal being, the horribly real incarnation of a Principle of Evil, the antithetical counterpart of the Principle of Good, which is God; so powerful that he is not merely the adversary but the rival of God: literally a counter-God, *Antitheos*.¹

Notice one characteristic of this mental attitude. It is not usually a case of demons but of the devil. This monarchic conception of the Power of Darkness is no doubt inspired by the tradition of the Church. Even in the New Testament we find Satan, the prince of this world, the prince of the powers of the air, him who reigns over death, *the* devil, appearing in synthetic rivalry to Christ. (St. Paul—2 Corinthians iv. 4—even makes so bold as to say, “the god of this world”.) The rhetoric of the Fathers, in particular the Latin writers of Africa, often takes us back to this point of view. Even Tertullian balances symmetrically against each other the all-good God, *optimus*, and the all-evil devil, *pessimus* (*De Patientia*, 5). For St. Augustine, it has often been remarked, antithesis is not merely a trick of style, a recipe inherited from Gorgias, but a basic category of thought. In his works we often—and sometimes most irregularly—find the devil’s role and even his personality paralleled with Christ’s.²

Among the moderns the import of these texts (or the echo of its lesson, sometimes very indirect) is not taken as it should be; as a striking summary, a useful or effective manner of presenting the facts by grouping all the infernal powers with their chief, the

¹ This term is borrowed from the apologist Athenagoras (ch. 24), who uses it simply as an adjective and in contexts where its repercussions are limited: “a power opposed to God, not that God has an opposite in the sense that Empedocles intends when he speaks of hate’s being opposed to love and night to day. . . .”

² For an example of this see the *De Trinitate*, ad. 1, iv, c. 10 (13)–13 (18).

better to make their part stand out against that of our one Saviour. It must not be understood as a denial of the existence of other powers, other evil spirits.¹

As they are interpreted or remembered, these "monarchic" texts give to reflection (if that word can be applied to the embryonic theological thinking that satisfies the man of today) a perilous bend in the direction of dualism pure and simple. God stands on one side, Satan on the other. The reality of the devil seems inseparable from the positive, ontological, substantial reality of the evil whose vehicle and symbol he is.

Now however outstanding in the eyes of an exact theology is the role among demons of Lucifer, Satan, their prince, the fact remains that modern thought (I continue to speak of what people *really think*, that which, though so often implicitly, animates their spiritual life) is profoundly ignorant of the true orthodox doctrine of the devil, the only one the Christian soul can accept because it is the only one that safeguards the omnipotence and unity of God, that precious core of our faith: monotheism.

We must realise that Satan—like the other demons, for though he is the most important he is still only one of them—is an angel. A rebel angel, a prevaricator, a fallen angel, indeed, but an angel still. He was created by God with and among the other celestial spirits, and even his fall and the disgrace it brought upon him could not take away the angelic nature that is the definition of his being.

For the theologian, demons come within the field of the treatise *De Angelis*.² The doctrine is part of a most firmly established tradition. It has been clearly defined ever since the days of the second-century apologists.³ It is a doctrine that the Church has always and repeatedly stressed, every time a fresh threat of dualism (one of the perennial temptations of the human mind) has forced her to define the borderline of this section of her terrain. As early as the end of the second century St. Irenaeus was using it against the Gnostics; it reappeared in 563 at the Council of Braga to counter the manichaean infiltrations of Priscillianism

¹ It is interesting to re-read the Epistle to the Ephesians (vi. 11-18), where singular and plural alternate; the devil, the evil one, contrast with principalities, powers, masters of this world of darkness, spirits of malice.

² Thus ST. THOMAS, *Summa Theologica*, par. 12, qq. 63-4; SALMATICENSES, *Curs. Theol.* vii, disp. 12; SUAREZ, *De Angelis*, vii-viii.

³ JUSTIN, *Apol.*, ii, 5, etc.; TATIAN, 7; ATHENAGORAS, 24.



Pl. 2. The Demon Pazuzu, personification of the south-west wind. Assyrian, 7th century B.C. (Louvre, Ph. Arch. Photo.)



Pl. 3. The Gorgon (archaic). Greek vase, 6th century B.C. (Louvre, Photo. Giraudon.)

(Denzinger, op. cit., 17th ed., 237); and in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council, against the Catharists (Denzinger, op. cit., 428).¹

There is no need to labour this point. It is a doctrine that everyone knows. The thing to notice is that these trite truths, which the elementary catechism has sown in the consciousness of every Catholic, which in a sense are always with us, have today become lethargic—almost sterile and almost useless. Our analysis of the reaction to this dogma of the modern mind here makes a further advance. The reason why our contemporaries find the devil so hard to swallow is that they give scarcely any genuine thought to the angels.

How can we fail to see that—except among theologians and truly spiritual souls—the place of the angels is fading out of our modern Christian thought and life? There is perhaps some vitality left in the devotion to the guardian angels, but that is looked on as a thing apart, quite disconnected from the rest of the theology of the angels. Think, for example, of the cult of St. Michael in the Middle Ages, witnessed to even now by monuments and place-names, onomatology and folklore. The 29th of September is labelled by our liturgists as a double of the first class, but what does it mean to most Christians—instructed Christians—nowadays? This is certainly a result of the materialism that characterises the culture of our age—or, to put it more precisely, to the over-exclusive value which is given to merely sensible experience, at the expense of all that relates to the intelligible, spiritual world within. Every Sunday Christians sing the Nicene Creed and claim to believe in a God who created “all things visible and invisible”. In practice they give no serious thought to the existence, the reality of the spiritual creatures of the invisible world. Here again we find part of the faith being cheerfully rejected in its implications.

This attitude, unadmitted but deep-rooted, explains the embarrassment we noted earlier in those—even such as believe and sympathise—who read the literature of the Desert. They are startled and often scandalised by the naturalness, the normality of the relations the good monks of Egypt and elsewhere kept up with these invisible beings (beings that, if I may say so, scarcely *were* invisible to them). Here we have a fact that the historian is

¹ *Adv. Haer.*, v, 24, 3.

forced to take into account: for men in the fourth century of our era the existence of angels both good and evil was not only the object of the most unwavering and explicit conviction but—and I am not exaggerating—of concrete, everyday, lived experience. It was as natural for them to say with the Psalmist, “In conspectu Angelorum psallam Tibi”¹ as it was to admire the heroes of asceticism who went out to fight devils² in the desert.³

It was with the greatest matter-of-factness, the utmost realism, that the Christians of those days interpreted St. Paul’s teaching: “We are not fighting with flesh and blood but with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this world of darkness, with the wicked spirits spread through the air” (Eph. vi. 12). St. Athanasius⁴ gives us the commentary of the great St. Antony, father of all monks, on the verse: “Great is their number in the air all round us, they are not far away from us . . .” This is not just one man’s opinion: Abbot Serenus told John Cassian that the number of wicked spirits working between heaven and earth is so vast that we must thank Providence that they are usually invisible.⁵ To encourage his disciple Moses of Petra, Abbot Isidore caused to appear on one side, in the West, the swirling host of all the demons, preparing themselves for battle, and on the other side, in the East, the far vaster army of the holy angels, “glorious and more shining than sunlight”.⁶ The Christians of the first few centuries did not, as we unconsciously tend to do, belittle the importance of the unseen world in comparison with the world of sense. Far from it, they laid stress on the countlessness (*ἀναριθμητος*)⁷ of the angel cohorts. It was widely held among the Fathers that the ratio between the number of the angels and that of all men, past, present and future, was 99:1. Their theory was that the lost

¹ Psalm cxxxvii. 1 (LXX or Vulgate); a good opportunity for taking the faith of hesitating moderns by surprise. We know that the Hebrew (Ps. cxxxviii. 1) here speaks of *elohim*. Crampon’s version (here following St. Jerome and the Greek translation of Aquila, Symmachus and “Quinta”) gives us, “in the presence of the gods” (which is archaeology); Segond avoids the difficulty by interpreting the phrase as “before God”; the new Latin psalter, traditional on this point, sticks to “in conspectu Angelorum”.

² On the desert, as the dwelling-place of demons, before turning to ancient folklore, consider the Scriptures: Leviticus xvi. 10 ff.; Tobias viii. 3; Isaiah xiii. 21; Matthew xii. 43.

³ See ST. ATHANASIUS, *Vit. Anton.*, 49–53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵ JOHN CASSIAN, *Coll.*, viii. 12, 1.

⁶ HERACLIDES, *Parad.*, 7.

⁷ Cf. ST. CYRIL of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, xv, 24; P. G. 33, 904B.

sheep of the Gospel parable represented humanity and the ninety-nine faithful, sheep the good angels. If, in the same spirit of numerical speculation,¹ we invoke the Apocalypse (xii, 4, where the dragon made one-third of the stars fall down from heaven) to prove that there are only half as many demons as there are faithful angels, how enormously out of proportion even that number is to a generation of human beings!

Far more than these uncertain guesses, what strikes us in the writings of Christian antiquity is the strong sense we find there of the reality of the invisible world. It was natural for St. Augustine to begin the parallel histories of the City of God and—what paradox!—the “terrestrial” City with the fall of Lucifer,² for angels and men in his eyes share in the same Sovereign Good, together make up one and the same society, one single City.³ We have only to read with unbiased mind the evidence, so very concrete, which remains to us from the lives of the Fathers to be able to judge of the closeness of the early monks to that co-world of angels, which seems to have revealed itself to them in so many ways. It reminds one of Francis Thompson’s lines:

“O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee . . .”

The writings of the Fathers seem to tell us, as the poet does: you do not know how to feel the presence of angels, nor see them nor hear them—that is because you no longer dare to believe they are real, but they go on existing just the same!

“The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places:—

Turn but a stone and start a wing!

’Tis ye, ’tis your estrangèd faces,

That miss the many-splendoured thing.”

¹ The texts relevant to both these points can be found in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. i, 1, col. 1205-6 (*Ange d’après les Pères*): vol. iv, 1, col. 353 f. (*Démon d’après les Pères, passim*).

² *City of God*, ed. DOMBART-KALB, xi, 1, p. 462: “duarum civitatum, terrenae scilicet et caelestis . . . exortu et excursu et debitis finibus . . . disputare . . . adgrediar, primumque dicam quem ad modum exordia duarum istarum civitatum in angelorum diversitate praecesserint.”

³ *Ibid.*, xii, p. 525, line 26: “habent . . . inter se sanctam societatem, et sunt una civitas Dei.”

To get a true idea of the value of this witness, we must remember that for the early Christians this feeling of reality was not an article of faith, their faith as Christians. Their belief in a world of invisible spirits, some good and some evil, was shared with all the men of their day. That was one of the good things common to the whole Mediterranean civilisation in the Hellenic or Imperial age, whether expressed in Greek or Latin, whether more or less under the influence of "oriental" infiltrations. The history of this ancient demonology has not yet been at all adequately traced.¹ None the less we know enough about it to see how far it represented an unquestioned certainty: this belief, which is first seen in Plato and his early disciples (think of the *Epinomis*) went on gaining ground in the Roman era, as witnessed by successive generations: Plutarch, Apuleius and the hermetic books and the neo-platonists quoted by St. Augustine.

Theologians nowadays have a hard task to distinguish in the Fathers' teaching on demons between what may be considered as a valid witness to the Church's thought, founded on Revelation, and what, on the other hand, is merely an echo of the cultural surroundings in which their thought and their writings were formed.

When the Fathers affirmed the existence of angels and devils and put forth opinions on their nature, there can be no doubt but that they considered themselves to be not merely setting down an act of faith but contributing to a science—a human science based on reason and experience. They spoke of demons as we today speak of evolution, as fact, or rather as a hypothesis accepted without argument by every educated mind. We know, for example, that the early Fathers are almost unanimous (within a few shades of meaning) in attributing to good and bad angels alike a material body, though the subtle matter of which it is made is far different from that of our human bodies. Their conviction is, of course, fed by inferences from scripture, the validity or invalidity of which matters very little. It is also a direct reflection of ideas entertained by the science of their time—such as it was—with which all the first Fathers were familiar.² In the same way they

¹ See the classic articles by Andres, in PAULY-WISSOWA, *Suppl.*, iii, under *Angelos* and *Daimon* and data collected by F. CUMONT, *Les Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain* (4th ed.), pp. 278–81, or FR. K. PRÜMM, *Religions-geschichtliches Handbuch für den Raum der alichristlichen Umwelt*, p. 386–92. Also such more modern works as G. SOURY, *La Démonologie de Plutarque* (Paris, 1942).

² So ST. AUGUSTINE, *City of God*, XXI, 10, p. 510, line 23: "nisi quia sunt quaedam

decided that the demons' habitat was the lower strata of the atmosphere and for this quoted St. Paul's authority (e.g. Eph. vi. 12), though in fact (as was probably already the case with St. Paul himself) this belief was the effect of a whole conglomeration of ancient ideas.¹ The air, and, among some, the dark air in particular—that is, the cone of shadow thrust into space by the earth on the side away from the sun—was supposed to be the normal dwelling of souls that by nature or by death were free from bodies of flesh.

Yet within this framework borrowed from the culture of their time, the Doctors of the early Church teach us something of true revelation. We find it more surely in what they were induced to deny than in what they asserted. Comparative Religion loves to denounce both Jews and Christians for borrowing their belief in devils from dualism. I shall not stop to discuss how far this statement is true, nor to trace through history the winding roads by which Revelation arrived at a clear definition. This analysis concerns itself with observations more exact than an analogy so sweeping. It matters little that to the eye of the logician Christianity may seem tainted with dualism as a result of its placing creatures so near to God. The important thing for us who are dealing with history is the consistent care of orthodoxy to be on guard against the danger of dualist heresies and religions properly so-called. As I said earlier, it was the repeated assault of this danger that led to the formulation of the doctrine concerning demons.

From her very first doctrinal controversies with Gnosticism, the Church has always and firmly laid it down that the origin and being even of demons could not have their source in some principle of evil external to God. Satan and the other devils were, like the angels, creatures of God—God the only Creator, who is infinitely good and all powerful. "We know well," St. Athanasius makes St. Antony say,² "that the demons were not created demons: God made nothing evil. They, too, were good when they were

sua etiam daemonibus corpora, sicut doctis hominibus visum est, ex isto aere crasso atque umido. . . ."

¹ These have recently been outlined by F. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (Paris, 1942), pp. 104-46, notably on p. 115, n.1, and p. 143, nn. 6-7; also his following *Pisciculi* (Mélanges F. Dölger), pp. 70-5.

² *Vit. Anton.*, 22.

created"—like the other angels. If they have turned evil, "fallen from celestial wisdom", it is through their own fault, through the misuse they have made of their liberty.¹ Tertullian stressed it with the insistence typical of the African church. Strictly speaking, God did not create the devil; he created an angel who, by a free act cutting himself off from God, turned himself into a demon.²

This has an important corollary: created good, the demons did not become wholly bad. They "fell". This does not mean that their being depended thenceforward on some principle different from that out of which all other creatures draw their life. In the order of being they continue to be angels. The meaning of this, shown especially by the characteristic phrase, "bad angels",³ is expressed very clearly by several of the Fathers of the Church. Thus St. Augustine explains that the *maligni angeli* subsist and live by Him who gives life to all things.⁴ They have retained not only life but with it some of the attributes of their earlier state, reason in particular, though theirs has now become warped.⁵

St. Gregory the Great, in his turn, asks in his commentary on the prelude to Job (i. 6) how Satan managed to get into the celestial court among the angels elect and explains that it was because although he has lost beatitude he still has the nature which he and they alike possess, "naturam tamen eis similem non amisit".⁶

This doctrine finds noteworthy expression in early Christian art. Since the period of Romanesque art, we have grown overaccustomed to demons pictured as foul monsters. This tradition of iconography whose technical apogee is in the almost surrealistically inspired creations of the Flemish painters, has the support of texts going back to the most authentic desert traditions. They can even invoke the primary source of

¹ See even as early as Jude 6.

² Cf. MARCION, ii, 10; likewise ST. JEROME, *In Eph.* i, 2, v. 5; P. L. 26, 467.

³ The expression comes from Psalm lxxvii. 49 (LXX), whose literal meaning is not clear. However, the New Testament calls devils angels consistently—Matthew xxv. 41; 2 Corinthians xii. 7; cf. 1 Corinthians vi. 3; 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6; Apocalypse xii. 9, etc.

⁴ *De Trinitate*, xiii, 12 (16); P. L. 42, 1626.

⁵ *City of God*, xi, 11, p. 477, l. 25.

⁶ *Moralia*, ii, 4; P. L. 75, 557; also iv, i, 641, and even GENNADIUS of Marseilles, *De Eccles. Dogmat.* 12; P. L. 58, 984.

all desert literature, St. Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, where we read, "If the devils see Christians, especially monks, working and making progress . . . they try to frighten them by changing their shape and pretending to be women, beasts, snakes, giants, troops of soldiers . . . so as to suborn by these monstrous apparitions those whose thoughts they could not lead astray."¹ In fact the *Life of Antony*² and all the similar writings³ are full of stories that describe the demons as appearing in the shape of monsters and animals. It should be noted that all these texts refer to forms momentarily put on by the devils to frighten the hermits. These shapes are therefore only permissible in Christian art when such temptations are being portrayed, not when what is called for is simply a portrait of the devil apart from his transient role of a bogey.

The art of later antiquity gives us less of a caricature, a far more noble portrait of the fallen angel. This was recently pointed out by E. Kirschbaum⁴ with reference to a mosaic dating from about 520 in the church of San Appollinare Nuovo at Ravenna. Here we see him as a fine-looking young man, with a halo and great wings, in dignified draperies. Only his colouring—dark violet, midnight blue—distinguishes him from the good angel whose figure balances his on the other side of Christ. The scene is the Last Judgment, the separation of the sheep from the goats. The blue angel's antagonist is a red angel, the colour of fire (the same violet or red spreads in each all over the halo, the hair, the body, the wings, the tunic and the cloak). This is clearly a symbolic interpretation of the generally accepted belief that angels had a body of subtle fire⁵ and demons a body of "dark" or "thick" air—to take this in exchange for their body of fire, a superior element, is one of the signs of their degradation and in a sense one aspect of their punishment.⁶

¹ ST. ATHANASIUS, *Vit. Anton.*, 23.

² *Ibid.*, 9; 53 . . .

³ Thus CASSIAN, *Conf.*, vii, 32; PALLADIUS, *Hist. Laus.*, xvi, 6. Besides these animal forms the shape most frequently assumed by the devil in Desert literature is that of a "hideous negro, completely black".

⁴ "L'Angelo rosso e l'angelo turchino," in the *Rivista de Archeologia Cristiana*, xvii (1940), pp. 209-27.

⁵ See Psalm ciii. 4 (LXX and the Vulgate), quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 7: "Thou that makest thine angels of winds and thy servants of burning fire."

⁶ See, for example, ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Gen. ad litt.*, iii, 10 (15); P. L. 34. 285, or for a witness contemporary with our mosaic, ST. FULGENTIUS of Ruspa, *De Trinitate*, 9; P. L. 65, 505.

The authenticity of this representation may perhaps be questioned—the hieratic face, so peaceful, with so much calm dignity, seems so far from “demonic”. Other monuments leave us in no doubt of their significance. For an example, I would refer the reader to a magnificent miniature in the famous MS. of St. Gregory Nazianzen in the French National Library.¹ It dates from about 880, but the archetype it reflects is far older, going back to the sixth century, if not earlier. Here we see pictured side by side the three temptations of Christ according to St. Matthew. In each of the three the figure of Satan appears next to that of our Saviour. He is shown as a graceful youth with huge wings, dressed nobly, like a philosopher, in a short cloak (unlike the figure in the Ravenna mosaic, he is not wearing a tunic). He might be mistaken for an angel were it not for the mauve colour that tints his flesh and hair and wings (the feathers are drawn in with brown lines)—an unexpected colour whose harmonious contrast with the solid ultramarine of the background and the very pale grey-blue of the drapery scarcely produces a “Satanic” effect.

The miniature is in bad condition. It has not only undergone the wear and tear of time but seems to have been damaged on purpose. Someone has scratched the devil’s face² in each of the three groups—an apotropaic precaution, but also, one may permit oneself to suspect, the outraged reaction of some pious Byzantine reader who could not understand so much dignity and beauty being given to the face of the Enemy.

It is always hard to estimate how close a symbolic picture comes to true doctrine, yet in the light of the texts from St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, which we quoted earlier, there seems here to be something more than a mere consequence of the Hellenistic horror of ugliness. We seem to see the expression of the fundamental truth that the devil is still an angel. In his fall he has kept the privileges of his unchanged nature; he still shows his original grandeur.

¹ MS. Grec 510, fo. 165, 2nd register from the top. Omont gives a good reproduction of it (unfortunately not in colour) in *Les Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, pl. 35.

² Careful examination of the MS. has convinced me of the intentional character of this triple mutilation; from the face of the last demon, the one on the right, one can conjecture that his lips had once, like those of Christ, been touched with carmine; that his hair, though not haloed, as in the Ravenna picture, had been edged or marked out with an occasional touch of gold (the cruciform nimbus of Christ and the bands of His purple tunic are also gilded).

These monuments bring us back once again to reflection on the problem, so basic for every religious mind, of the nature of evil. True Christianity's rooted and consistent opposition to the dualist heresies boils down to a refusal to give a positive character to evil, to consider it as a *real* principle, a substance.

St. Augustine is often credited with the doctrine of the non-substantiality of evil. It is, however, such an essential part of Christian thought that it is even found in the doctrinal tradition of the Greek Church. We find it clearly if briefly formulated, quite independent of any connection with Augustinian thought, in St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa. The first of these devoted a sermon to proving *that God is not the author of evil*, where he says, notably: "Do not imagine that evil has a real substance, *hypostasis*—perversity does not exist in the same way as a living thing. You can never have its substance, *ousia*, really there before your eyes, because evil is the privation of good."

Similarly Gregory of Nyssa in his famous *Catechetical Discourse* demonstrates that evil has not God as its author but is born within ourselves by the free choice of our will, when our soul in some way withdraws itself from good. Just as blindness is the privation of a natural activity, sight, the genesis of evil can only be understood as the absence, *apousia*, of good. Good is present in our nature. Evil, on the other hand, is non-existent, *anyparkton*, and only appears because of the withdrawal, *anachôresis*, of good.¹ Good and evil are not each other's opposite in the order of substance (*kath'hypostasin*), but in the way in which being is the opposite of non-being. Evil does not exist of itself, but is conceived as the absence of the better.²

A sermon, a catechism; you will have noticed the type of dissertation from which these texts are drawn. This is because this "apophatic" definition of evil was considered, in Cappadocia in the second half of the fourth century, as an established doctrine. The bishops thought it a profitable thing to convey to the Christian people's minds. It was part of the Church's official teaching.

Besides realising this, we must remember that the deepest and most detailed working-out of this classic doctrine of the non-substantiality of evil was made by St. Augustine in the long polemic directed against his one-time co-religionists, the Manichaeans.

¹ Catech. 5, 11-12, p. 32 Meridier.

² Ibid., 6, 6, p. 38.

For him this was no textbook problem. It was not merely speculation. He had lived it and discovered it painfully in the hard mental struggles that led him late in life but at the full maturity of his genius, from his early dualism to acceptance of the true faith. This is no place for a detailed account of this doctrine and its development—both are well enough known¹. Enough for present purposes merely to underline one or two points.

When we say that evil is not a substance,² not a reality, when we say it is “a nothing”,³ we are not thereby denying its existence. There is a tendency among some to look upon this doctrine as a bolthole, a position that is too easy, that makes one shut one’s eyes to the object one is supposed to be considering. This accusation founders when it comes up against St. Augustine. It involves brushing aside the witness of a life-work and a life. More strongly than anyone, St. Augustine, the repentant sinner, had—not to say was obsessed by—the feeling of the terrible and tragic presence of evil in the world, in man, in his own life.

No, to say that evil is not in itself and of itself a positive thing does not imply a denial of its existence. Evil has no place in the order of being. It belongs to non-being, which is not the same thing as nothingness. This hair-splitting but enlightening distinction, necessary to the sense of our argument, comes to us from Plato (*Soph.*, 258b, etc.). In fact, the Augustinian doctrine loses all its meaning if one takes a strictly Eleatic point of view (being is, non-being is not: fundamental propositions that put the thought of Parmenides in a nutshell). St. Augustine’s teaching develops in the orbit of what M. Etienne Gilson⁴ has suggested calling “the theology of essence” (as opposed to existential theology).

We may not simply conceive of existence on one side and nothingness on the other. There are degrees of being and a hierarchy of beings. God alone is in the true, full sense of the word: “vere est,

¹ See, for example, R. JOLIVET’s little book, *Le Problème de Mal d’après S. Augustin*, Paris, 1936, which is particularly good in showing the distinction between St. Augustine’s doctrine and the theory of Plotinus (*Enn.*, i, 8: Evil is the *Materia Prima*) even though reading Plotinus played a decisive part in its elaboration: JOLIVET, p. 137; *Conf.*, vii, 11 (17); *Enn.*, iii, 6, 6.

² *Conf.*, vii, 12 (18).

³ *Solil.*, i, 1 (2); P. L., 32, 869.

⁴ *Le Thomisme*, 4th ed., pp. 71 ff. This outlook must not lightly be labelled platonic. St. Augustine teaches us to read Plato in the light of Exodus; as in the *City of God*, viii, 11, p. 338, line 10.

summe est". We must make ourselves realise that all other beings, strictly speaking, neither are nor are not—"nec omnino esse, nec omnino non esse":¹ all created beings *are* because they share in the being of God and they *are more* or *are less* according to their nearness to perfection.

In this perspective, evil appears as a diminution of being in the created (and therefore changeable) being in which we find it. Sin and the fall that results from it in angels as in men has reduced it to "less being than it used to have when it was closely united to Him who (alone) fully is"—"ut minus esset quam erat cum Ei qui summe est inhaerebat".² The being of a fallen angel—or man—is lessened but not completely destroyed, for everything that *is*, is good, and if the creature's good was all taken away it would cease to exist.³

I should like to be able to lay hands on an illustration for this delicate point (we have stretched human words as far as they will go). Undoubtedly "omne simile claudicat", but I am struck by the inadequacy of St. Gregory of Nyssa's comparison: the devil has by treachery mixed evil into the free will of man, as when someone puts out the living light of a lamp by pouring water into the oil that feeds it.⁴ An unfortunate image, for water is just as real as oil.

The corrupt nature of the devil, or of man since the Fall, must be described as a mixture of being and nothingness; let us say that this nature is in some way flawed, riddled like a piece of dolomite or millstone—better still, like a sponge.⁵ Evil corresponds to the holes, the lacunae: it is emptiness, non-plenitude; the sponge only exists in virtue of the parts of itself which *are*, the solid material. Evil does not belong to being: it is a corruption of being, a defect, a disease, a disorder, "malus modus, vel mala species, vel malus ordo."⁶

¹ *Conf.*, vii, 11 (17).

² *City of God*, xiv, 13, p. 32, l. 27 (the reference is to Adam).

³ *Conf.*, vii, 12 (18).

⁴ *Disc. Catech.*, 6, 11, p. 43.

⁵ We find the sponge made use of in St. AUGUSTINE, *Conf.*, vii, 5 (7), but there it illustrates a different point. He uses it to show his conception of the world, in his Manichean days, as penetrated by and so to speak steeped in God (the world and God were then for him both realities of the "corporal" order). He is thinking of a live sponge soaking in the sea. What I ask the reader to imagine is a *dry* sponge whose solid parts represent reality and the air between, nothingness.

⁶ *De Natura Boni*, 23; cf. 4 ff.

We must get it very clear that it is a malady affecting *a being*. It is essential for us to grasp that for evil to *exist* it needs the support of a created nature which in so far as it subsists—lessened indeed by this mingling of non-being, weakened by this privation of a greater perfection—is not evil but is still good.¹ This is especially the case with the devil. The Angel of Darkness only subsists because in spite of everything he is still an angel. Let us consult St. Augustine again: “In condemning fallen nature, God did not take away from it everything He had given it, or it would have been annihilated. . . . The nature of the devil himself only subsists by the action of Him who, since He is the fullness of Being, is the cause of the being of everything that in any way is, ‘ut ipsius quoque diaboli natura subsistat, Ille facit qui summe est et facit esse quidquid aliquo modo est’.”²

This attitude may have the appearance of facile theorising. Yet viewed again in its spiritual context this doctrine of evil conceived as impurity of being seems laden with a deeply tragic significance. It cannot be detached from the drama of the whole creation. The result of sin, evil shows itself as the negative counterpart to the most noble of God’s gifts to His reasoning creatures: liberty, the possibility of which rests in the last analysis, on the mystery of creation itself, of withdrawal, *Tsimtsum* (to use the beautiful idea developed by the Galilean cabbalists of the sixteenth century³), of that withdrawing of the Being who though He is all-fullness has willed not to fill everything and in a creative act whose unfathomable originality is beyond our powers of analysis⁴ has left scope for the creature and its freedom.

In this thoroughly Jewish and Christian view of evil and of the infinitely precious good which is conditioned by its possibility, there is something far more disturbing than the simple acceptance of its reality with which dualism is satisfied. Evil is something that need not have existed. It is the outcome of a history as impossible to foresee as anything else, and more tragic than any other history,

¹ *Conf.*, vii, 12 (18).

² *City of God*, xxii, 24, p. 610.

³ On the *Tsimtsum* theory developed by Isaac Louria in the school of Safed, see especially G. SCHOLEM, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York, 1946, pp. 260 ff.; MGR. C. JOURNET has pointed out its interest for the Christian theologian in *Connaissance et Inconnaissance de Dieu*, Fribourg, 1943, pp. 31 ff. (Eng. trans. *The Dark Knowledge of God*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1948.)

⁴ The peculiar difficulty of penetrating the mystery of creation is measured by the resistance to it of philosophical thought, such as that of J-P Sartre, as stressed recently by M. BEIGBEGGER, *L’homme Sartre*, p. 28.

for it reveals in all its depth and ambivalence the mystery of liberty. Satan, an angel, is the free being who first chose to move away from the Source of all being and towards the nothingness from which he had been drawn.¹

HENRI-IRÉNÉE MARROU

¹ It is because it is made out of nothing that the creature, whether angel or man, is capable of sin: ST. AUGUSTINE, *C. Iul. op. imp.*, V 39; P. L. 45, 1475-6, developing the *De Nupt. et Concup.*, ii, 28 (48); P. L. 44, 464.

THE DEVIL IN THE WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

“THERE IS NO EVIL SPIRIT WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO SUFFER
SOMETHING FOR HIS OWN HONOUR”

GOD ALONE IS. Nothing here below can give us the least idea of His infinite Perfection. From the writings of St. John of the Cross we could easily gather a whole litany of divine attributes, and all we should have would be but a long succession of broken and partial views of what in reality is but one sole and unique Object. For God, in the simplicity of His Being, is that Plenitude with whom one day our souls are to be filled and satiated. In the meantime, no matter what hours of joy we may know, there is no created object that has power to fill the essential void in our being. At the bottom of the fullest of human joys an unsatisfied longing always remains. To say that is to say nothing against the quality, often very pure and enriching, of these joys; nor does it imply any kind of pessimism, as if every human joy were marked with a malediction. It is merely the simple recognition of our state as creatures, obliged to go begging for the plenitude which we know so well we lack. Now the plenitude that no creature can give us in any absolute fashion, God offers us of pure grace by calling us to union with Himself. The joy to be born in us of vision face to face and love at last fulfilled, God sets before us even here below in the obscurity of faith and in the reality of a love identical with that in which we shall rejoice eternally.

The devil, deprived by his sin of this hope, is consumed with jealousy to think that man, of a nature so much lower than his own, should be destined nevertheless to be filled with the plenitude of the divine Being.

We must here emphasise, as others have done before us,¹ the

¹ Cf. FR. BRUNO DE J.-M., *Saint Jean de la Croix* (Plon), p. 236: “We may well be allowed to confront the teaching with the life, and to understand each in the light of the other.”

marked contrast that exists between the biographies of St. John of the Cross and his own writings.¹ The former abound in picturesque and circumstantial stories in which the devil plays a quasi-legendary part, based, however, on the depositions of the witnesses at the Process of Beatification.² The latter contain a definite conception of the devil, based, above all, on the assertion that he is a spirit and that his aim is to prevent the soul from attaining to pure union with Him who is Spirit. The biographies are full of "diabolisms" dwelling on exterior apparitions and similar phenomena with an insistence which is not perhaps that of St. John of the Cross himself. The works, which do not ignore the diabolisms, but put them precisely in their proper place in the devil's action, bring out a subtler conception of this action, and one in which the setting of the stakes has far more tragic possibilities.

The devil disputes the possession of the soul with God, and, after his own fashion, seeks to outbid God. But as against the plenitude of God's Being and His infinite Reality, what has he to offer? One thing and one only, dressed up, however, in many different guises: a simulation, a semblance of the Being of God. He is the bankrupt who decks himself out in the garb of the wealthy. He is the relative that mimics the Absolute. Any mask will serve, provided only it deludes a soul into believing that the total satiety for which she hungers can be found there. And since he cannot, like God, act as the sovereign master of the soul, he turns to suggestion as his favourite weapon; and, to sharpen it, avails himself of any means that lie to hand, even those most foreign to the spiritual nature.

The worst evil that the devil can do a soul is not by any means simply to frighten it by appearing in some repulsive form; it is to prevent that soul from cleaving to God. To deprive it of God, even temporarily, to halt it on the road towards union on no matter what pretext; to maintain it amidst the relative when in fact it is called to the Absolute; to deceive it by appearances, even pious appearances, and so to distract it from the Reality which is

¹ The few pages we here publish make no claim to be an exhaustive study. Any-one who wants a complete documentation may usefully turn to the wholly objective article of FR. NIL DE SAINT-BROCARD, O.C.D., published in *Sanjuanistica*, Rome, 1943. The author, who has given his study a scholastic form, leaves no text uncited in which the Mystical Doctor deals with the devil.

² Cf. FR. BRUNO DE J.-M., *Saint Jean de la Croix*, pp. 137, 140, 141.

God: that is what the devil is after, and that is what the soul, for her part, has to fear.

All his temptations are aimed at reducing these two essential points in the soul's defences: faith, on the one hand, which is the root of all theological life; and humility on the other, which plays a similarly fundamental part in the moral domain. Before any demonstration of the intimate and often reciprocal causality that unites faith and humility, we can easily discern, it would seem, and without any artificial system-making, an essential parallelism between these two virtues.

Faith sets before us the very reality of God. The whole effort of the devil is therefore aimed at bringing about a loss of faith, and feeding us instead with the illusions to which our sensibility is only too prone. Humility is a just appreciation of our real status as dependent creatures; and here it is of our own reality that the devil would denude us, filling us with complacency before a mask that conceals from us our own true features. Thus, in the worship of everything that is other than God attained by faith, and in complacency with something other than ourselves as justly appreciated by humility, the devil prevents us from adhering to reality, to truth, to Being, and feeds us with illusions, with the simulated, with the artificial. All this can be summed up in one sentence: the precise point of the devil's attack on the soul lies in preventing her from attaining to possession of the plenitude of the Being of God, in luminous faith and loving humility.

The light of faith, which gives us God as He really is, albeit obscurely, "is more than darkness for the devil".¹ The hymn to faith that sounds through the whole work of St. John of the Cross, shows us what power it has to put us in touch with God Himself, without any created intermediary. Into this domain, reserved for God alone, the devil cannot enter, and the soul that lives by faith is wholly beyond his grasp.² The white robe of faith so dazzles him that he cannot even see the soul it adorns.³

Moreover, the constant teaching of the Mystical Doctor tells us (and very consoling it is) that in the aridity of the dark night, when the soul has nothing but faith to guide her, she goes forward in complete security from all the wiles and snares of the devil.⁴

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 1.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 1.

³ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 13.

In those desolate hours, when the ordinary psychological mechanism is paralysed, the devil does not know how to reach the soul.¹ In the silence of the night, all doors being shut, God enters this soul—but He alone can do it. The devil does not even know what passes within her.²

It is easy to see how deep an interest the devil has in barring the road to the soul and forbidding her entrance into this life of faith which thus reduces him to impotence. In all the works of St. John of the Cross the two most important pages about the devil are those in which he shows how he lies in ambush like a highway robber just at that point at which the soul, quitting little by little a mode of approaching God that is still too human, enters on the direct road to union, the road of contemplation. "This evil one takes his stand, with great cunning, on the road which leads from sense to spirit".³ The stakes are high, and much more important in the devil's eyes than tripping up any number of other souls over gross temptations. If the soul escapes him at the moment when she enters on this life of pure faith he will no longer be able to reach her, and she, on the contrary, will be as formidable to him "as God Himself".⁴ We cannot help being impressed by the vehemence of the saint's expressions. The soul that allows herself to be lured by the devil suffers immense loss, and undergoes—even without knowing it—very great injuries. "And it is a thing that should move us to great compassion that the soul is unable to realise how, just for the sake of some one mouthful—of some one delight or some particular kind of knowledge—it is losing the happiness of feeding wholly upon God Himself. For this it is that God brings about in that solitude wherein He places the soul, absorbing it into Himself through these solitary and spiritual unctions".⁵

There is a touch of drama about the description given by St. John of the Cross of the devil's tactics. When the soul is seeking to penetrate ever deeper and deeper into her own interior, passing through her seven mansions to this centre where God dwells, the

¹ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 16, 23.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 23.

³ *Living Flame of Love*, stanza iii; see *Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. by E. Allison Peers (1935), vol. iii, p. 93. (These more precise references will be given when the text in question is not so easily found—TRANS.)

⁴ *Maxim* 177. Cf. *Points of Love* (47), in E. Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 254.

⁵ *Living Flame of Love*, Stanza iii; cf. Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 195.

devil sets himself athwart her road at each vital point, but, above all, at the moment when the soul would enter on the life of pure faith.¹

Here alone do we fully realise the importance of temptations that concern the sensibility. The saint always affirms that the devil can have no direct influence on the spiritual faculties of the soul, and still less can he penetrate to its substance—a thing reserved for God alone. He can act on the soul only through its sensitive faculties. There he is his own proper domain. He cannot even know what passes in the soul: only the reactions of the sensibility enable him to infer the presence of the interior graces with which she is favoured.² The sphere of our sensitive faculties—exterior, but perhaps, above all, the interior (imagination, sensitive memory)—there lies his proper “port of call”, his “market place”;³ whither he comes as much to sell as to buy. Very rash would that man be who would pretend to be able always to escape from the wiles of such a broker! Holy Scripture abounds in stories showing how easily he succeeds in deceiving souls through the mediation of all that is sensible.⁴

To be masters of our sensibility and especially to have complete control over the imaginative memory, is to “guard the gate and entrance to the soul”.⁵ With an insistence that should serve to rivet our attention, with a kind of absoluteness which verges on exaggeration, the saint affirms that “finally all the greatest deceptions which are caused by the devil, and the evils that he brings to the soul, enter by way of the knowledge and reflections of the memory”.⁶

When we realise the extent to which our nature is fascinated by sensible things, when we recollect how fertile in invention is the devil (never at a loss for traps and ambushes), when we add to all this the powerful coefficient of the subtle suggestion by which he so easily “plants” things in the imagination, so that “the false appear to be true and the true false”⁷—then perhaps we may divine the purpose of the saint’s insistence.

But we may divine also why it is that, in a sense, the most formidable temptations of the sensibility are not those that are the

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 11.

² *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 23.

³ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 16 and iii, 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, 4.

grossest. St. Antony's pig must here be put in its proper place. St. John of the Cross is, of course, aware that the devil is capable of subjecting souls to bestial temptations, of tormenting them with "the spirit of fornication",¹ even to the point at which their torment becomes worse than death itself. He has written a strangely sombre page in which, speaking no doubt from experience, he declares that the ravages caused by the love of all that is sensible—even grossly so—are altogether incalculable, and that "there are found very few, even among the holiest, who have not been to some extent stupefied and bewildered by this draught of the joy and pleasure of natural graces and beauty".² And yet this is not the most dangerous side of the devil's activity. In attacking souls that are moving generously towards God, "he knows very well that they would seldom consent to manifest evil".³ And so his "commonest" ruse⁴ consists in entangling them in his nets under pretext of good. Hence the danger of rashly accepting exterior visions, interior imaginations, sensible emotions, in the process of communing with God. It is so easy for the devil "to dissimulate his errors",⁵ and so, above all, to lead the soul to place her reliance in something other than pure faith. That is the first and chiefest harm which all these sensible visions cause.⁶ Supposing them to be good in their object, or even in their immediate consequences, the mere fact of "derogating from faith"⁷ is already harmful enough. Merely by desiring these visions and impressions the soul "becomes very gross".⁸ The obstinacy about this displayed by some becomes at times frightening; for then, in parallel fashion, self-complacency and pride develop unhindered, and to such a degree that it becomes at last "impossible to undeceive them".⁹ Here we can hardly help presupposing what we are about to say on pride. But how can we avoid being disturbed by the saint's reference to certain souls already far advanced, and then seduced by this demon of exterior visions and sensible experiences to such a point "that their return to the pure road of virtue and the true spirituality is extremely difficult"?¹⁰ Some, setting out in all sincerity on the road to God, abandon themselves to a gluttonous indulgence of their interior

¹ *Dark Night of the Soul*, i, 14.

² *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 22.

³ *Cautions*; cf. Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 223.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ii, 21.

¹⁰ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 2.

imaginations. Pride takes a hand. They become contemptuous of others. "Some of them become so proud that they are worse than the devil".¹ We are far from the grinning demon and strange hubbubs in the night; in which, however, we can see some meaning if we regard them as attempts to bar the road to pure faith by fear, while other and more dangerous temptations would do it by allurements.

The devil is "the sworn enemy of humility",² and that is easily understood because his sin was the sin of pride, and because he remains for ever unmoved in this same attitude. From the moral side, he is just as much set on destroying the soul's humility as he was (from the theological) on destroying its faith; though often enough, as we shall see, he does both at a blow by one and the same temptation.

The danger is such that few souls escape it. The slightest failure of humility, the least bit of self-complacency, are enough to open the door to the devil. At every turn St. John of the Cross notes his endless invitations to pride, and especially to the pride that arises from our relations with God. They are like the pressure of water on a dam: the least fissure and it breaks through. If, as is very evident, we must be on our guard against complacency in our natural gifts, however trifling, we must be still more so in the case of good works done for God. The devil sleeps like a dangerous animal in the shadow of good works whence we conceive a secret admiration for ourselves.³ Wise are those who foil him by making themselves poor in spirit!⁴ If God has such a horror of "souls inclined to great things",⁵ the devil for his part, smooths the path of souls to all that may feed their pride, even, and above all, on the supernatural plane. So quick is he to "sweeten and dazzle" the soul,⁶ that in her secret self-admiration she is ready to slip into every kind of absurdity. . . . A soul that is humble and justly distrustful of herself "must resist revelations and visions with as much effort and care as she would use in the most perilous temptations".⁷ Even, and indeed especially, when the soul is favoured

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 9.

² *Cautions*, 2; cf. Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 224.

³ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 30.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 27.

with extraordinary gifts, the gift of prophecy, for instance, or the gift of miracles, she must bring all her prudence to bear to avoid falling into spiritual complacency, and even at last, it may be, into "shameless audacity"¹ on their account. "Wherefore Christ will one day refuse the requests of many who have esteemed their good works in this way, when they beg Him for glory because of them, saying: Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and worked many miracles?—Then He will say to them: Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity".² Teresa of the Child Jesus explicitly reminds us of it. All that is not built on pure faith and does not help us to more love can become riches of iniquity unto injustice. Nor is it only beginners in the spiritual life who are exposed to this peril. In a sense, the more we receive, the more we run the risk of foundering in pride.³

Hence the immense boon of spiritual direction—a gesture of faith as well as humility—and the protection it affords against the devil.⁴ How, all alone, should we be able to uncover certain false humilities—for that is the end of ends—and certain fervours, very deeply moving indeed, yet founded on self-love; not to speak of the sweet tears of humble devotion? . . . Who shall discover *alone* the hidden springs of complacency that still lie hidden there?⁵

And how should we not be duped by a longing—easily canonised, to be sure—to do more and better than others, by a holy ardour that despises all gross temptations . . . and those that succumb to them!⁶ How astonishing a chapter it is that St. John of the Cross devotes entirely to pride—and, maybe, still more to humility!⁷

Here, as often elsewhere, the concrete character of St. John of the Cross's work permits of living expositions which a merely speculative treatise would have excluded. Not only does the devil, a master of illusion, attack faith and humility as being the two essential points to reduce, but we see that failures of faith almost always arise from lack of humility. And a spiritual life based on something other than pure faith, nourishing itself on savoury feelings or interior words, tends of itself to foster pride and

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 31.

² *Ibid.*, iii, 30.

³ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 2.

⁴ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 29.

⁶ *Dark Night of the Soul*, i, 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 2.

complacency in the soul. The starting-point seems indeed to lie in lack of humility. He loses his soul who loves it ill. But after that there supervenes a manifest reciprocal causality, and God alone knows where this infernal circling is going to lead us.

The saint at once¹ goes on to teach that it is self-love that very subtly deceives souls and prevents them from relying solely on the theological virtues.

He describes the devil's tactics several times. The evil spirit insinuates himself almost always into the work of God by way of interior words, savoury feelings and imaginative visions. A secret opinion in one's own favour does not at first seem to be a very monstrous thing. But soon one begins to want to know more of these sensible experiences. The devil does not fail to insinuate his wares. And at one blow he makes a breach in faith (from which one derogates in relying on the sensibility), and in humility (very much led astray by this quiet appreciation of one's own virtue).² The mechanism is the same even in the case of souls that are much more advanced.³ At the root there is always a confidence in oneself, a rash reliance on one's own chosen path, a refusal to submit to the judgment of him who holds God's place, or simply the sweet intoxication of pride in feeling oneself favoured by God above others. From this moment on, all kinds of intellectual confusions become possible, and they simply go to augment the affective disorder.

What, then, shall we say when the unfortunate soul comes up against obstacles in the very place where she ought to find help? Certain spiritual directors (and contemporary experience often eloquently confirms the past) do not hide from their subjects the admiration they feel for their close relations with God. How, then, can the soul resist the thought that she is one of the spiritual élite? And then perhaps the director begins to ask that soul to intervene with God on his own behalf, and to entreat Him to reveal like things to him as well.⁴ . . . Doubtless a truly humble soul would avoid this snare. But if she is already inclined to such mysterious communications with God, she readily succumbs to the temptation to pride. Since illusion and the devil—the one aiding the other—can have a great part in all this, the answer received is bound to be sometimes erroneous. Nothing more is needed in some cases to

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 6.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 11.

³ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 2.

⁴ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 18.

make the soul lose its faith; which it has come to identify with these imprudent and delusive ways of treating with God. We can sum up everything by saying that the devil's chosen rhythm lies in sensibility-pride, while God's is in faith-humility.

St. John of the Cross does not underestimate the part played by the devil in the interior life. He notes that the devil is a spirit,¹ and therefore much cleverer than we are at forecasting the future. His intelligence is penetrating,² and his intuitions very much more shrewd than ours. The subtlety of this wicked spirit is reinforced by his wide experience, both of the ordinary ways of God and the habitual reactions of the immense majority of men.³ This envious one contends with God Himself, as in the opening scenes of the Book of Job, mentioned more than once by St. John of the Cross.⁴ His usual tactics seem to be governed by one sole principle: *In order the better to thwart the work of God in the soul he always begins by counterfeiting it.* "For in the very means which we have for our relief and help this crafty devil contrives to hide himself in order to catch us when we are least prepared".⁵ Insistently the saint returns to this essential thesis: "The devil habitually wears the same guise as God assumes in His dealings with the soul, setting before it things that are very like to those which God communicates to it, insinuating himself, like the wolf in sheep's clothing, among the flock, with a success so nearly complete that he can hardly be recognised".⁶ How strange are the phrases that show us the devil contesting the soul with God and "doing what he can against it according to the measure of justice".⁷ "Whereat it must be noted that this is why; that in the same measure and with the same means by which God guides the soul and bears Himself towards her, so and in the same measure does He permit the devil to do".⁸ The saint illustrates his thesis by examples drawn from the Book of Exodus.

St. Paul likewise affirms that the devil transforms himself into

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 26.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 21.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 21.

⁴ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 23; *Living Flame of Love*, stanza ii; cf. Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 47.

⁵ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 37.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 21.

⁷ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, 23.

an angel of light,¹ and our saint often recalls this saying of the apostle's.² And he gives us a homely comparison which we should often do well to remember: whoever sews leather attaches the thread to a hard bristle to use as a needle. "For in order to deceive the soul and to instil falsehoods into it, the devil first feeds it with truths and things that are probable in order to give it assurance and afterwards to deceive it. He resembles one that sews leather with a bristle, first piercing the leather with the sharp bristle, after which enters the soft thread; the thread could not enter unless the bristle guided it".³

Thus at certain times there may be "good" demonic influences, salutary enough to tranquilise imprudent souls. But we have to be always on the watch, "for there is no evil spirit who is not prepared to suffer something for his own honour".⁴ The sign-manual of the devil lies in this constant collusiveness, which results in a veritable confusion and prevents us from seeing clearly. He is the father of lies, and a past master in the art of mingling the false with the true. Slippery, elusive, he fabricates all manner of mixtures and compromises. It is a true mercy of God when he makes an open attack. The history of Christ's temptation in the desert is daily renewed: the devil arms himself with pious texts out of the Scriptures. On the world's great stage the life of souls may seem to be a commonplace affair; but in truth this life is ruled by a mighty and invisible contention between God and the devil. And yet we may have confidence in the ultimate outcome, for the formidable means the devil adopts, by express divine permission, to ape the ways of God, will never attain results that leave the soul disarmed and powerless. In the long run, all these temptations and traps enter into a plan traced and overruled by the Wisdom of God. "God mortifies only to give life, humiliates only to exalt".⁵ He knows why He permits these dangerous deceptions, and the soul, if only she is faithful, will thereby find herself greatly enriched in love. That is the normal law.⁶

For we may see that the remedies proposed by St. John of the

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii, 11.

² *Ibid.*, iii, 10 and 37.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 27.

⁴ *Judgment given by the saint on the case of a nun of the Discalced Carmelite Order*; see in Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 300 (*Sundry Documents*, i, at end).

⁵ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 23.

⁶ *Living Flame of Love*, stanza ii; see in Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 53, and *Cautions*, *ibid.*, p. 225.

Cross against the devil go to confirm the conception he sets before us of his nature and tactics. The three "cautions" recommended by the saint for avoidance of the devil's deceptions may be resumed in three words: the spirit of faith (that is the second caution)¹—humility²—and obedience, which in truth is a concrete way of living in the spirit of faith by humility.³ The truly humble find no difficulty in living thus in a perfect spirit of faith, and so in complete obedience to those who hold spiritual authority over them and stand in the place of God. Do we need to insist further on the purely spiritual character of these remedies? Yes: God is a Spirit, and He seeks adorers in spirit and in truth.⁴ It is by spiritual weapons that the children of God must overcome the evil spirit.

One cannot help being a little disturbed by the silence on the subject of the devil that reigns in so much of the so-called "modern" spirituality. The simplest thing is not to speak of it: if one speaks, one seems to smile, and to leave the hearer with the painful impression that we only believe in the devil by way of an easy conformity that does not pretend to depth. And it is doubtless the masterpiece of this master of illusions to pass himself off as non-existent in a world where he so easily gets souls to go the way he wants, without needing to show himself: he has every interest in not doing so.

St. John of the Cross, for his part, has no doubts concerning the devil. He knows that he is the "strongest and wiliest of our enemies",⁵ and the most "difficult to unmask".⁶ He is skilful enough to turn the world and the flesh to his own account, as his two most faithful acolytes.⁷ The saint does not hesitate to say that the devil "causes the ruin of a great multitude of religious who set out on the life of perfection".⁸ Not, let us hope, to their eternal loss, but he prevents them from realising all the holiness they aim at. Let him smile who will: "There is no human power that can be compared with his, and thus only the divine power

¹ *Cautions*, *ibid.* pp. 223-5.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, iii, 39, 40.

⁵ *Dark Night of the Soul*, ii, 21.

⁶ *Cautions*; Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, pp. 223-5.

⁷ *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza iii; Allison Peers's trans., vol. ii, 44-5.

⁸ *Cautions*; Allison Peers's trans., vol. iii, p. 224.

suffices to be able to conquer him, and the divine light alone to penetrate his wiles".¹

But the Mystical Doctor would have fully approved the saying of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, that little children do not suffer damnation:² for they know themselves to be weak—and that is their strength—and they believe with a total faith in their Father in heaven, so powerful and so good. The little children are right. The devil can do nothing against them. They go straight to God, and it is God who guides them. "And those alone have the Wisdom of God who are like ignorant children, and laying aside their knowledge, walk in His service with love".³

P. LUCIEN-MARIE DE SAINT-JOSEPH,
O.C.D.

¹ *Spiritual Cantic*, stanza iii; Allison Peers's trans., vol. ii, p. 45.

² *Novissima Verba*: cf. *Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*, English trans. (London, 1927): "Counsels and Reminiscences," p. 295.

³ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, i, 4.

ST. TERESA OF JESUS AND THE DEVIL

I

FROM THE writings of St. Teresa we can put together a portrait of the devil.

A physical portrait to start with. Let us say at once that there is nothing original about it. St. Teresa had not the fancy of a Hieronymus Bosch. She went to no trouble to imagine her enemy, and he absolved her from it in his own apparitions. He has a "hideous form", his mouth is "horrible", his voice "terrible". From all his body there issues "a great flame, perfectly bright without any shadow".¹ Like Proteus, he takes several shapes. One day he is "a most frightful little negro"² who gnashes his teeth. On another occasion "two devils of most hideous shape" seem to "encompass with their horns" the throat of an unhappy priest³. Once more, a multitude of devils seized on the body of one of the lost before the eyes of the saint, tossed it to and fro, and "dragged it about with great hooks."⁴

But this monster with the black skin, the horned head, and doubtless also cloven feet, who vomits fire, and tosses the souls of the damned⁵ to his imps to be torn with hooks, is only a symbol. St. Teresa, who never attributed more reality than was needed to the imagery of her visions, was not unaware of it. It was without any image at all, moreover, but simply by making her feel his presence, that the devil manifested himself as a general rule. "It was only rarely," she says, "that I saw Satan take a bodily form; I know of his presence through the vision I have spoken of before, the vision wherein no form is seen."⁶

The moral portrait of the devil is therefore much more interesting than the physical. It is not very attractive, as one may guess.

¹ *Life*, xxxi.

² *Ibid.*, xxxi.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xxxi.

Lying¹, hypocritical², shady³, cruel to those whom he has in his power, the devil, to complete the picture, is as cowardly when we know how to resist him as he is impudent when we yield.⁴ In short, he is a sorry individual and a bad tyrant. He owes nothing to the poetry that arrays the rebel angel in seductive glory, the type of guilty or simply unfortunate genius. In spite of certain traits (darkness, falsity) he is not conceived on metaphysical lines. St. Teresa sees him as a concrete being, a real being, as real and concrete as you and I. This being is God's enemy, therefore the enemy of all that is good, and very especially of this primal good, the salvation of souls. She sets him forth simply, straightforwardly, and without beating about the bush; resuming in his sole person all that is flatly contrary to moral perfection and opposed to the will of God.

On this basis we might explain these demonic apparitions by suggesting that St. Teresa, inspired by the Christian faith and popular beliefs, was simply projecting outwards and personifying all those tendencies and impulses which, in herself as in others, hindered the loyal unification of her interior life and her courageous flight towards God. She would live in the truth; if she felt drawn towards lies, especially to the secret lie that wears the air of truth, that was because she was being seduced by a liar, that is to say by the devil. She is ardent, resolute, generous; if she feels fatigued, if she suffers anguish, if she finds herself faint-hearted and too much preoccupied with self, the image of the devil arises before her eyes as the symbol of such perilous states of soul.

Now it is very true that the saint recognised a relation between the devil and the unruly and perverse movements of the interior life. These latter are the devil's best allies: better still, they arise from what we may call his own chosen *points d'appui*. He lurks at the source of all our errors, all our illusions, all our weaknesses and pride, and all that comes out of them, he turns to account. It

¹ *Life*, xv: "Es todo mentira." Cf. *ibid.*, xxv: "Friend of lies, and nothing but a lie himself."

² *Passim*, *Foundations*, v: "Pone tantos desgustos y dificultades debajo de color de bien." Cf. the Letter to Simon Ruiz, 19th October 1569: "In all that is pleasing to the Lord the devil would show his power under the fairest appearances"; and *Interior Castle*, Mansion i, ch. 4.

³ *Interior Castle*, i, 2: "Es las mesmas tinieblas."

⁴ *Way of Perfection*, xxiii: "Es muy cobarde." *Life*, *passim*. Cf. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, St. xv: "Teme mucho ei demonio al alma que tiene perfeccion."

goes ill with the soul that relies too much on its own virtues,¹ that complains too much of its own discomfort,² that falls in idly with some blameworthy habit,³ that fails to avoid occasions of sin,⁴ that being sad and troubled neglects prayer and penitence.⁵ It goes ill with that religious who allows herself to become slack in things of small importance in themselves.⁶ In cases of this sort an offensive is prepared and launched; the devil bestirs himself, comes out of hiding, and there he is at once with his pitchfork and his lies.

But a potent reflection of St. Teresa's, one of those astonishing phrases that her genius let fall so lightly from her pen, suggests distrust of an hypothesis, doubtless natural enough, but too simple. Speaking of the locutions that come from the devil, this psychologist whom nothing escapes remarks first that they produce nothing but aridity and disquiet. Then she adds: "This disquiet is such that I know not whence it comes: only the soul seems to resist, is troubled and distressed, without knowing why; for the words of Satan are good, and not evil. I ask myself whether this may not be so because one spirit is conscious of the presence of another."⁷

"One spirit is conscious of another." No need to look elsewhere in St. Teresa for experience of the devil. In the course of a life that was far from rectilinear, in which she had known many temptations, encountered many dangers, stumbled against many obstacles, in which, distrustful or otherwise put on her guard, she had had to suspect many traps, she was very well able to distinguish the thing that comes from ourselves and draws all its potency from ourselves, from that which is added to it over and above, from that which tends to give a sinister twist even to the most excellent of movements, and lends a strange power to those that are crooked and pernicious; in short, from all that comes from another. Her spirit tended to God, and another spirit would turn her away from Him; and just as her soul was stirred to its depths when the divine call sounded, so it shuddered through and through at this hideous contact.

At bottom, in so far as she was able to express herself directly, the objectivity of her experience of the devil is substantiated in

¹ *Way of Perfection*, xxxviii; *Interior Castle*, v. 3.

² *Ibid.*, xi.

³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁴ *Interior Castle*, v. 4.

⁵ *Relations*, vi.

⁶ *Conceptions of Divine Love*, ii.

⁷ *Life*, xxv.

the light of the objectivity of her experience of God. When feeble souls, riddled with contradictions, disabled, disarticulated, whose bits and pieces alone are living, believe themselves to undergo the action of the Almighty or of His enemy, they would seem to attribute all that stirs within them, all that they lack energy to master, to the action of another.¹ Teresa was not one of these. By an heroic effort she installed herself, and God maintained her, in the Absolute, free, looking down on the world, mistress of herself. From the summit of this tower whence "the eye sees far-off things",² her proper spiritual domain stood clearly before her; she could trace its limits, and unerringly discern the presence of other spirits.³ As soon as the spirit is frankly disengaged from all that is not itself, it may rightfully affirm that, in certain cases, it becomes "conscious" of another spirit.

II

Between St. Teresa and the devil, even in the time of shallow tepidity, there was never this deadly peace, of whose conditions we may read in the *Conceptions*,⁴ a peace in which the bartered soul forgets its destiny, and under cover of which the enemy, feigning friendship, or better, carefully disguised, awaits the opportunity to seize his prey. But the struggle between them took different forms; and it would seem to have gone through an evolution that covered three distinct periods.

When a soul receives graces from God in prayer, the devil takes more pains to bring about her downfall than he would expend on any number of less favoured souls. For that soul can draw many in her train and do the devil much harm; and moreover the mere sight of God's love for her is enough to enrage him.⁵ From the very day on which Teresa resolved to live in the eye of God, and to care for nothing but God, the devil already began to note her.

¹ St. Teresa knew it well. She writes (*Foundations*, iv): "He [the devil] does not so much produce this evil in us, as our own perverse inclinations and bad humours, especially if these be melancholy."

² *Life*, xx.

³ Cf. M. LÉFÈVE, *Sainte Thérèse d'Avila* (Desclée De Brouwer, 1947), pt. iii, ch. 10.

⁴ *Conceptions of Divine Love*, ii. There is a peace "when a worldly man goes on very quietly, plunged in great sins, and yet so secure in his vices, that his conscience does not trouble him in anything. This peace, as you have already heard, no doubt, is a sign that he and the devil are friends; also the devil will take good care not to make war on him while he remains in this life."

⁵ *Interior Castle*, iv, 3.

At the outset, he was insidious. He tried her with false humility: was it not simply a piece of pride on her part to entertain such high desires and to set out to imitate the saints?¹ And then what a mockery to practise prayer while still so full of faults!² He exaggerated her fears: would not all these austerities be the ruin of her health; would not all these tears leave her blind?³ He set the snare of despair: she and her sins were the sole cause of all the calamities of the world;⁴ then he set the snare of certain visions in which pleasure did not wear the air of a pure and chaste love;⁵ and lastly the snare of languid or over-passionate quietudes, which left neither peace behind nor any true love.⁶

Teresa, who feared so much to be deceived, went through some trying moments. When, after examining her written confession, certain advisers who saw Illuminism everywhere and whose psychology was superficial, assured her that the devil was the author of all that took place in her interior life, her fright and affliction were so "keen" that she "did not know what to do". She did nothing but cry.⁷ However, the evil spirit hardly made a success of it. Teresa was too well protected by her heroic resolution to give all to God,⁸ by the firmness of her faith,⁹ by the purity of her conscience.¹⁰ She was protected by the Cross which she so passionately embraced.¹¹ She was protected by her own wideawake lucidity, seldom at fault, which when in doubt took refuge in obedience.¹² She was protected lastly and above all by her love and fear of God¹³ who hears our prayers.¹⁴

Thus repulsed by a soul that clearly saw the way to the summits and had no other purpose than to follow it, the devil did not give up the game. He dropped the mask, exchanging craft for violence. Having gained nothing by trickery it seemed that henceforth he could only hate. It is the period of horrible apparitions

¹ *Life*, xiii.

² *Ibid.*, vii.

³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxx.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

⁶ M. LÉPÉE, *Sainte Thérèse d'Avila*, pt. iii, ch. 7.

⁷ *Life*, xxiii.

⁸ *Way of Perfection*, xxiii: "Ha gran miedo a ánimas determinadas."

⁹ *Life*, xxv.

¹⁰ *Foundations*, iv.

¹¹ *Interior Castle*, ii, *passim*.

¹² *Foundations*, prologue.

¹³ *Way of Perfection*, xl.

¹⁴ *Passim*.

and physical torments. "On another occasion," she relates in the *Life*, "I was tortured for five hours with such terrible pains, such inward and outward sufferings, that it seemed to me as if I could not bear them." Her torment was excessive. All those around her were frightened. But the Saint had no fear. She knew that the devil cannot act on the soul save through the body and the sensitive faculties.¹ He cannot reach the inner fortress of the spirit unless the soul abandons it of herself. Why worry then about these "frightful little negroes," these bodily sufferings? Teresa takes refuge in God. The devils are the Lord's slaves, and can do no ill to His servants; they cannot so much as stir without His permission. Then, to get rid of these troublesome "flies" as she calls them, or, if you prefer it, of these hornets that prove so trying to her hyper-sensitive nature, she takes the offensive. She makes the sign of the cross, and the devils flee. But they come back. This time she sprinkles them with holy water. The remedy is still more efficacious. They do not merely fly off, but, duly corrected, appear no more. And Teresa laughs.² Now, she triumphs by contempt.

And the triumph is complete. The spouse of God will certainly remain on her guard. Prudence and wisdom are always necessary, for the devil is unsleeping; and he sleeps the less the more perfect one is.³ The soul can only be fully assured if the Divine Majesty holds her in His hand, and if she herself does not offend Him.⁴ In St. Teresa however, body and soul are so spiritualised, and the spirit is so closely united with God, that the devil can do no more. He did not show himself during the latter years of her life. There was no longer any question of him at all at the hour of her death. As St. John of the Cross sings: "Neither did Aminadab appear"; the divine embrace gave so much victorious strength that the devil "fled afar in terror".⁵ Teresa murmurs her last prayer in peace: "The time has come for us to meet, my Well-beloved, my Master."⁶

MARCEL LÉPÉE

¹ *Interior Castle*, v, 3: "It is by way of the imagination that the devil attacks us."

² For all this see *Life*, xxxi.

³ *Way of Perfection*, vii.

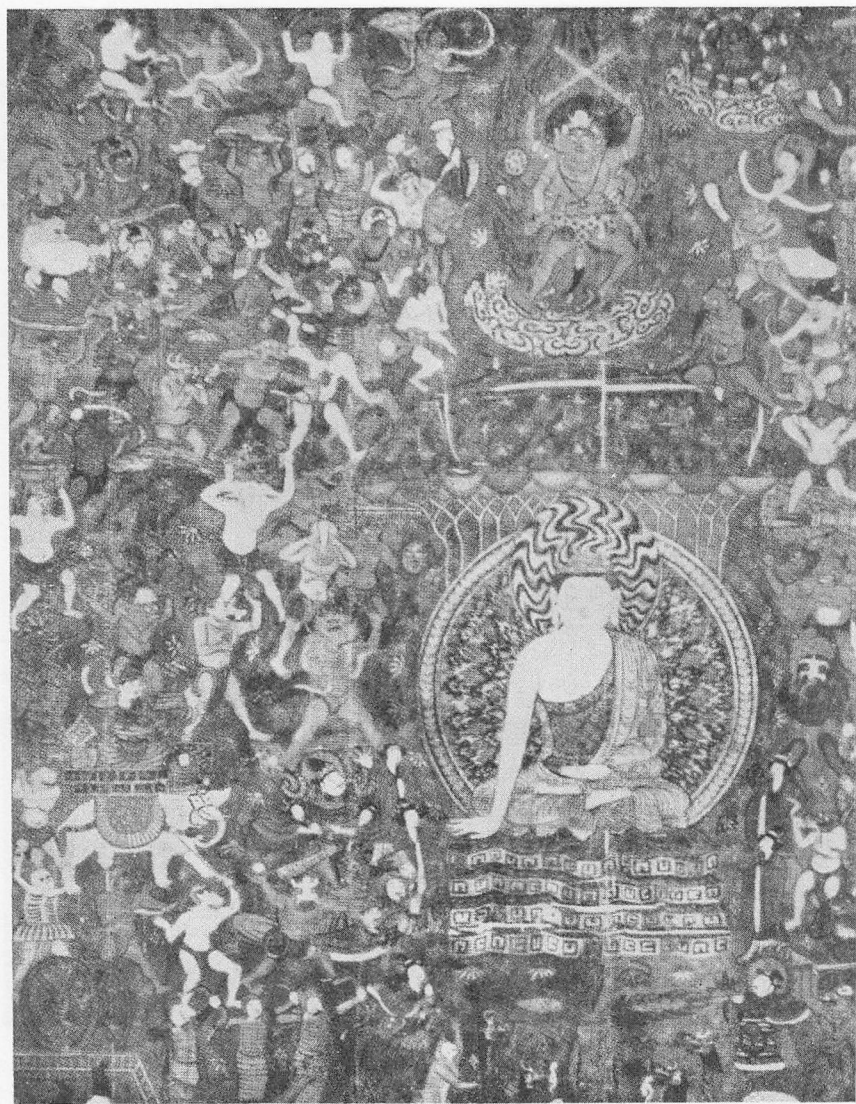
⁴ *Interior Castle*, vii, 2.

⁵ *Spiritual Canticle*, st. xxxix or xl.

⁶ Deposition of Maria de San Francisco for the Process of Beatification. Cited by Silverio, ii, p. 242.



Pl. 4. Tibetan demon. Statue in the monastery of Lamajuru, c. 18th century A.D.



Pl. 5. The demon Mara's onslaught on Buddha. Touen-Hang, c. 10th century A.D.
(Photo. Musée Guimet.)

PART II

**THE PLACE OF THE DEVIL OUTSIDE
CHRISTIANITY**

THE ADVERSARY OF GOD IN PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS

INTRODUCTION

THERE is a certain difficulty in speaking of "the devil" in connection with the history of religions, the term being often inappropriately used. Are we justified in using it when dealing with the primitives? Yes: provided we make the sense in which we use it quite precise. And we shall take care at the same time to define what we mean by "primitives".

If we speak theologically, basing ourselves on the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, it is easy enough to say what we mean by "the devil"; but when we deal with religions, taken apart from revealed religion, the terminology becomes extremely confused. There is no need to go back to the first centuries of Christianity to find the name of devil or demon given to every superior being worshipped by the pagans; even in our own day, though chiefly in non-scientific works, we meet with this use, or rather abuse, of a term which is definite enough in itself. We say "abuse" because it suggests a very precise, a too precise, idea which for the most part fails to correspond with the beliefs of the people in question.

There is confusion no less serious in the use of the words "primitive" and "uncivilised". Have we not seen a famous author, M. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, whose theories on the mentality of primitives have made so much stir and gained so many adherents, treat as primitives—not indeed in theory, but in fact—practically all the non-European peoples, including the Chinese and the Japanese?¹ Furthermore, the primitives are often spoken of as if they constituted a homogeneous body, as if they displayed, always and everywhere, the same customs, the same beliefs, the same mentality—or at least, if any variations at all are admitted, they are supposed to occur along the line of a uniform evolution. It is

¹ See especially his first work: *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (Paris, 1910); consult the criticism of FR. W. SCHMIDT in: *Anthropos*, vii (1912), pp. 268-9.

not our purpose here to discuss the psychological theories of M. Lévy-Bruhl,¹ which, for the rest, he has since considerably modified. What we want to know is this: which peoples can be properly classified as primitives?²

A precise delimitation is difficult. It is not a question of classifying natural objects, but of distinguishing between different forms of human civilisation—forms which derive from human freedom and are not subject to laws as strict as those governing the world of irrational things. However, it can be said in general that a high civilisation starts with the art of writing, and that peoples who have no writing of their own belong to inferior civilisations and constitute the primitives.³ After that, there are other differences distinguishing the higher civilisations from the lower. Let it suffice to mention technics, economics, social and political organisation: generally, a greater wealth of cultural elements—which, however, does not mean that the civilisation is of higher worth as a whole.

This delimitation once effected, it remains to be seen what differences can be established within the one category of the "primitive". A very striking difference appears in the field of economics: we must distinguish on the one hand between the simple food-gatherers and hunters (*Jagd- und Sammelstufe*), whose economic activity is of the purely receptive order and confined to appropriating what nature spontaneously offers, and, on the other hand, the *producers* who direct the activity of the forces of nature with a view to the multiplication either of plants (agriculturists) or of animals (stock-breeders).⁴

The transition from a regime of reception to a regime of productive activity marks so important a break that we are justified in making a first classification of civilisations on this

¹ See on this subject OLIVIER LEROY, *La raison primitive. Essai de réfutation de la théorie du prélogisme* (Paris, 1927); FR. PINARD DE LA BOULLAYE, *L'étude comparée des religions*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1929), vol. ii, pp. 214-23 (§ 424 b); against the theory of uniform evolution, *ibid.*, pp. 195-242 (§§ 413-35); W. SCHMIDT, *Handbuch der vergleichenden Religions-geschichte* (Münster i. W., 1930), pp. 127-9; K. L. BELLON, "Autour du problème de la mentalité primitive", in *Anthropos*, xxxiv (1939), pp. 118-29 and the bibliography cited in these studies.

² In what follows we shall prefer the word "primitive" to "uncivilised" because, properly speaking, there are no men devoid of all civilisation, but simply men lacking the higher civilisation.

³ On the importance of writing as a means of fixing the spiritual patrimony of a civilisation, see W. SCHMIDT and W. KOPPERS, *Völker und Kulturen*, i; *Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft der Völker* (Regensburg, 1924), pp. 44-5.

⁴ See PINARD, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 435-6.

principle. Fr. W. Schmidt has in this way distinguished the *primitive* civilisations (more strictly, *Urkulturen*)¹ characterised by food-gathering and hunting, from the *primary* civilisations (*Primärkulturen*) which arise from the former by passing over to productive economics.

Further investigations have shown that some very significant differentiations in social organisation, and even in religion, accompany the change just mentioned. In food-gathering and hunting societies there is great equality: the juridical status of the two sexes is hardly differentiated; there is private property, but it is very equally divided up; the tribal organisation is quite rudimentary, and there is neither aristocracy nor slavery. In the sphere of religion we find a predominating belief in a Supreme Being, creator of the world and of mankind.

In the primary civilisations the social organisation becomes more complicated and shows more specialised functions. Amongst the nomadic shepherds the dependence of the woman and her subordination to the man are more marked; and still more so among the higher hunters whose organisation is based on totemism (belief in the animal origin of the clan, or at least in the existence of certain relations between a particular clan and a particular species of animal). On the other hand, in the oldest agricultural civilisations the woman becomes of more importance, for it is she who has created the agricultural art. Through mutual cross-influences, through intermixture and exchange of cultural elements, the social organisation becomes steadily more and more differentiated; and thus the secondary and tertiary civilisations arise.

Analogous phenomena are observable in the sphere of religion. The Supreme Being is more or less relegated to the background by the cult of the moon, of the sun, of human ancestors, by animism, magic and so forth; so much so that he often falls into complete oblivion. Amongst the nomadic shepherds a relatively strong belief in him remains, but he begins to be confused with the material heavens and many of his functions are transferred to derivative divinities (*Absplitterungsgestalten*).²

¹ This word does not mean that these civilisations are identical with the original civilisation of the human race, but simply that they represent the most ancient type of civilisation that our means of investigation can reach. Cf. FRITZ BORNEMANN, *Die Urkultur in der kultur-historischen Ethnologie* (Mödling bei Wien, 1938).

² On the historical movement in ethnology, its methods, its results, and the criticism directed against the evolutionist school, see PINARD, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 392-401

This sketch of the various categories of primitives, short and summary as it is, should enable us, nevertheless, to answer the second question: In the history of religions what are we to understand by "devil"? The devil, Satan—these names designate the adversary of the good God, of the Supreme Being; the evil being *par excellence*; generally also the author of all the ills that afflict the world. Belief in the devil presupposes, therefore, belief in the Supreme Being; and that is why, when speaking of primitives, we can speak of the devil only in connection with the most ancient civilisations (*Urkulturen*) and the civilisations of the shepherd nomads (*Hirtenkulturen*). Where the Supreme Being is unknown, or where the part he plays is largely effaced, we can indeed have spirits, even mischievous spirits, evil genii; but we are not justified in calling any one of them the devil. And so we shall avoid the use of this term as much as possible even when speaking of the peoples aforesaid, so as to preclude all confusion.

THE ADVERSARY OF GOD IN THE PRIMITIVE CIVILISATIONS OF FOOD-GATHERERS AND HUNTERS (*Urkulturen*)

Formerly, these types of civilisation were much more widely diffused than they are now. They have been driven back in the meantime by the higher civilisations and now occupy but a minor portion of the earth's surface. They are to be found chiefly at the northern or southern extremities of the continents. Schmidt has distinguished three principal groups: the Southern, comprising several tribes in the south-east of Australia; the Central, comprising the pygmies and pygmoids in Africa and south-eastern Asia (including Ceylon, the Andaman Islands and the Philippines); and the Northern, or Arctic-American, whose representatives are found in northern Asia and are also disseminated among the Esquimaux and the American Indians. Among the peoples of this third group we meet with the idea of an adversary of the Supreme Being in the sense defined above, but no such

(§§ 184a-186), pp. 419-44 (§§ 196a-202), pp. 478-92 (§§ 225-31); vol. ii, pp. 195-304 (§§ 413-84); W. SCHMIDT and W. KOPPERS, op. cit.; W. SCHMIDT, *Handbuch der Methode der kulturhistorischen Ethnologie. Mit Beiträgen von W. Koppers* (Münster 1. W., 1937); and many important articles in *Compte rendu de la Semaine d'Ethnologie religieuse*, 5 vols. (Paris-Brussels).

conception exists either in the Central¹ or Southern group;² or at least in the latter group there remain but a few faint traces.³

The myths of certain Indian tribes, especially among the inhabitants of the northern part of Central California and amongst the Algonquins, mention a very typical representative of the evil principle. In California he is identified with the prairie wolf (Coyote, *Canis Lyciscus latrans*) and goes by this name. He often appears in the myths in a human form, but is always called Coyote, because in the end, according to the myth, he gets transformed into this animal.⁴ He comes on the scene when the Supreme Being has finished, or almost finished, the work of creation. He attempts to spoil the divine work or to appropriate something of it for himself. He is represented in several myths as having brought death into the world; a thing not willed by the creator. For a better understanding of this belief let us cite a few examples.

In the cosmogonic myth of the Lenapes (Delawares), an Algonquin tribe, it is related how the Great Spirit created the earth and the heavens, along with the sun, moon and stars, and lastly men and animals. "But a bad spirit made only bad things, monsters; he made the flies and the midges" (the pest that spoils the short Arctic summer). Then, after describing the happiness of the first men, the myth continues: "But an evil being, a very potent magician, came on the earth secretly. He brought with him injustice, sin, unhappiness; he brought tempest, disease and death." In what follows the myth speaks of a great serpent who hated men, who drove them out of their native land, and caused a great inundation in which some of the men were devoured by marine monsters and others were saved by their ancestor Nana-boush on a turtle.⁵ This great serpent is probably identical with the bad spirit previously mentioned.⁶

The Arapaho, another Algonquin tribe, possess an extremely

¹ W. SCHMIDT, *Der Ursprung des Gottesidee*, vol. vi (Münster i. W., 1935), pp. 214, 248-9, 290, 390, 412. In what follows we shall rely especially on this important work (abbreviation of title: *UdG.*); the parts of it published up to the present are: vols. i-vii (Münster i. W., 1912-40); vol. viii is in the press; vols. ix-xiii exist only in manuscript (see *Ethnos* [Stockholm, 1942], vii, pp. 127-8). It gives all the references to the original sources.

² *UdG.*, vi, 324.

³ *Ibid.*, vi, 390, 412; ii, 648, 659-60, 727, 878-9, 881-2, 884-5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 306.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 417-19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 420; cf. 837-8.

lengthy account of the creation (its recitation in the sacred ceremonies occupies four nights) of great literary beauty.¹ Here the adversary intervenes while the creator is still engaged in forming the earth, but is preparing to finish it. He is called Nih'āsā ("bitter man") and, as appears from a comparison with other myths, he is the sole survivor of a generation of evil beings, cannibals, created before the present human race and then annihilated by the creator.² Nih'āsā arrives, holding a staff, in the assembly of men in whose presence the creator is finishing his work, and he asks for the creative power and a part of the earth. The creator grants the first of these two requests. Nih'āsā stretches out his staff and begins to form hills and streams. The whole assembly is aghast at his audacity. Next the creator takes a little pith from a poplar and casts it into the water. The pith sinks, but soon returns to the surface. "And you men, you shall live thus" (i.e. you shall die, but soon revive). But Nih'āsā said: "The earth is not very large and will soon be over-populated. I have a better proposal to make." Then he took a pebble and threw it into the water. The pebble sank and disappeared for good. "Thus shall be the life beyond the grave." Then the creator said: "You have asked for a part of the earth; I will make you another earth for yourself." He took a handful of earth and cast it into the sea. "Where this earth shall fall there shall be your country—beyond the sea."³

According to the myths of the Maidu, a tribe of central California, the creator wanted men, when growing old, to plunge into a certain lake and so be made young again. He showed them how it was to be by rejuvenating Kuksu, the first man. But Coyote wanted men to die, and told them that this would be better; for then they would have solemn ceremonies for the dead, widows would be able to marry again, and so on. The creator yielded, unwillingly, and permitted the change of plan. Then Coyote organised a festival that was to open with races. His only son, an excellent runner, quickly outdistanced the others, and passed close to a hole where the rattlesnake lay hid. The snake bit him, and in a few moments he died. Coyote, seeing that his son was dead, began to lament. Then he carried him to the lake

¹ *UdG.*, ii, 691-717 (for the text: 692-714).

² *Ibid.*, ii, 714-15, 805, 808; v, 667-70.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 707-9; cf. 714-17; v, 675-6.

which the creator had destined for the rejuvenation of men and threw him into it; but the dead did not return to life. Thus was Coyote punished for bringing death into the world.¹

One of the most beautiful myths on the origin of death is that of the Wintun, another Californian tribe; but unfortunately we can do no more than give a short summary of it here. Ollelbi, the creator, desired that all men should live as brothers and sisters, that there should be no birth and no death, and that life should be agreeable and easy. In pursuance of this design he made a species of nut (a species still very important today in the food of the tribe) which has no shell and falls of itself when ripe. Furthermore, he charged two brothers to construct a paved road which would allow men, when they became old, to go up to heaven, to bathe in a marvellous spring, to drink of another spring, and so to become young again. While the two brothers are busied about this work a man approaches them, who in fact is Sedit, the adversary of Ollelbi. He gives his advice: it would be better, he says, to have marriages, births and deaths and some work to do in the world. One of the brothers allows himself to be persuaded, and both of them set out to destroy the nearly finished road. They are changed into gypaeti and fly away. Sedit repents of bringing death into the world, for now he knows that he, too, will have to die. He makes himself a mechanism of leaves so that he can fly up to heaven, but the leaves wither and he falls and is dashed to pieces. Ollelbi looks down at him from the heights of heaven. "See," he says, "the first death! From henceforth men will die."²

Among the Samoyedes, in the extreme north of Siberia, there exists a myth on the creation very like that of the Arapaho recounted above. In the beginning there was no earth but only water. Num, the creator, lives in the heights and with him some birds. He sends them to dive and look for some earth in the depths of the ocean. Of the small portion of earth that is brought up Num forms the great world. As soon as it is big enough to serve for the erection of a dwelling, Num says to the birds: "Let us rest for this night." Then comes a mysterious old man asking shelter for the night. Num at first refuses; for the unknown has given no help in forming the earth. But the old man insists, and

¹ *UdG.*, ii, 128-31; see also v, 219-20, 242-5, 300, 305, 315-16, 349, 374, 377-8, 380-1, 453-5, 726 note 1, 751.

² See the complete text of the myth: *ibid.*, ii, 88-96, with explanation, *ibid.*, 96-101; cf. *ibid.*, v. 216-19, 374, 377.

Num finally receives him. When dawn comes the old man is no longer in the hut. He is found at last at the furthest point of the earth; he pretends to be washing his face, but in fact he is trying to break up the earth. Num says to him: "What are you doing there? You have already broken half of my work into pieces. Away with you!" The old man departs. Then Num makes the earth bigger, provides it with rivers, trees, animals, and assigns dwelling-places to men. At this moment the old man returns and demands a place to live in for himself. Num again refuses, but the old man insists: "Leave me only the spot in which I shall plant my staff; that will be enough." Num says: "Well, that does not amount to much. So be it." The old man makes a hole with his staff and slips into it, saying, in a tone of mockery: "Good, now I am under the earth, and I go to carry off men" (by making them die).¹

These myths witness to a belief in the existence of a mysterious being, adversary of the creator, who upsets and spoils his work, bringing death and every kind of evil into the world.² Those we have chosen are the most complete that we possess; some of them, nevertheless, seem to show gaps, and several of their details are hardly comprehensible save by means of comparison with the different variants of one and the same theme. We need not be surprised at that if we remember that these myths are very ancient and, at any rate till recent times, have been handed down orally.

This same belief exists in many other North American tribes,³ and traces of it are found among several of the hunting peoples of northern Asia,⁴ and, with greater explicitness, among the nomadic shepherds to be dealt with in the next section. These ideas are certainly very far from being clear and systematic; they often become obscured on account of migrations and the mingling

¹ *UdG.*, iii, 352-3; cf. *ibid.*, 353-5, 554; v, 809-10, 834. Among the Samoyedes there are also myths in which the evil being is invited by the creator to create, to form the earth, etc., but does not succeed (*Ibid.*, ii, 354; v, 809-10). The same theme is found again in North America, in connection with the creation of men (*Ibid.*, ii, 114-17; cf. ii, 202-3).

² *Ibid.*, vi, 36-42, 47, 81, 90, 95, 203, 299-300, 390-1; see also, besides the myths already cited: v, 42-4, 59, 85-6, 108-9, 111, 116-17, 151, 174, 313, 315-17, 319, 369, 380-2, 750-1, 766, 771.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 32, 41, 43, 59, 78, 79, 105, 127-34, 143-4, 150, 177-9, 249, 304, 369-70, 399-400, 414, 416, 440, 446, 482, 509-10, 535-6, 575, 606, 636-7, 717, 783, 805, 808-10, 834-8, 840-1, 846, 853-6, 868, 959; v, 369, 373, 405-7, 417, 511-12, 517, 529, 542-3, 553, 617-18, 626-7, 659, 667-72, 750-1, 766, 887; vi, 126, 179, 202-3, 269, 527-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 353, 448-9, 451-2, 468-9, 554; v, 809-10, 834, 892; vi, 63-4, 269.

of myths. Thus the adversary of the Supreme Being is sometimes confused with the first man, or with the culture-hero (*Kultur-heros*); at times he even assumes the functions of the Supreme Being himself, becomes creator and so on. But the detailed analysis of the whole immense mass of mythic material undertaken by Fr. Schmidt proves that all this is due to later contaminations.¹

A very interesting question, however, remains to be discussed. What did the men of this civilisation, the most primitive of all, think of *the origin of the evil being*? Is he independent of the creator? This serious question remains very commonly unanswered. The adversary is there; he turns up from nobody knows where, or is simply introduced as co-existent with the Supreme Being.² In the Maidu myth, Coyote and his "dog", the rattlesnake, arise from the earth.³ But accounts are not lacking in which the origin of the evil being would not seem to be independent of the Supreme Being. Sometimes he comes of the ill-success of a creative act which has preceded the creation of the present human species,⁴ or else he is a kind of "throw-out" or waste product of the creative action. In the mythology of the Aïnu, aborigines of northern Japan, evil spirits have a very curious origin. After the formation of the world the creator threw away the obsidian axes he had used in the work; they rotted in the earth, and thence came the ill spirits (which are very numerous, but have a supreme chief).⁵ The Koryaks, a tribe of northern Siberia, have a myth that tells how the Great Crow was born of the dust that falls on the earth from heaven when the Supreme Being sharpens his stone knife. (This Great Crow is not, properly speaking, the adversary of the Supreme Being, but rather the ancestor of men and the culture-hero; but since he does happen at times to withstand the Supreme Being we are justified in using this myth for purposes of comparison.)⁶ The Gluskabe of the Wawenocks, an Algonquin tribe, a being of similar character, made himself out of the remains of the clay sprinkled with water from which the creator had formed the first man.⁷

¹ *UdG.*, ii and v, passim.

² See, besides the myths already cited, *ibid.*, ii, 90, 105, 112, 214, 307, 854-5, 868; v, 151; vi, 399.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 606, 637, 690; cf. 714-15, 805, 836.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, 448-9, 488-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 403; cf. iii, 554.

⁷ *Ibid.*, v, 523-30.

A mysterious hint is not lacking of a certain familiarity existing in primitive times between the Supreme Being and his adversary. According to a Maidu myth, the creator's body was luminous but his face remained always hidden, nobody had ever seen the face of the creator;¹ only Coyote had seen it, they say.² May we recognise here some dim memory of a "fall of the devil"? That would evidently be too rash, for an isolated datum is too frail a basis for such an interpretation. This one excites our curiosity rather than satisfies it.

However, it remains unquestionable that in the most primitive group of civilisations the belief in a representative of evil is deeply rooted, and that the myths that attest it are so widespread, and so original in content and form, that it is impossible to attribute it to any borrowing from Christian sources. On the contrary, we must regard it as something very ancient belonging as of right to important religious groupings, albeit not universally found in all religions of the same antiquity.³

This belief is still living in that type of primary civilisation which has retained the closest likeness to the most primitive: that is to say in the civilisation of the nomadic shepherds (*Hirtenkultur*).

THE ADVERSARY OF GOD IN THE CIVILISATIONS OF THE NOMADIC SHEPHERDS (*Hirtenkulturen*)

The origin of this form of civilisation is to be sought in the immense steppes of central and northern Asia. There are strong reasons for believing that the first animal to be domesticated by man was the reindeer: the geographical and climatic conditions of these regions made its gradual, indeed almost imperceptibly gradual, domestication extremely easy. Amongst the Samoyedes of today we may still watch the gradual transition from the hunting to the breeding of the reindeer. Having followed the migrations of the wild reindeer in order to hunt them, they still go on travelling, with their herds of domesticated or semi-domesticated animals, from one pasturage to another.⁴ Later

¹ *UdG.*, ii, 109; cf., 143, 306.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 114, 143.

³ *Ibid.*, vi, 61-4, 88, 95 (nos. 10, 11, 19), 98, 179-82, 298-300, 390-1, 399, 412, 484-5, 489, 507.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 340; W. KOPPERS (op. cit. above, p. 110, note 3), pp. 507-10, 512-14.

on, this new art, the art of breeding, was extended to the horse, to the camel, and to other animals. The most typical forms of the civilisation of the nomadic shepherds are to be found among the Uralo-Altaic peoples. The Indo-European peoples, and still more the Semitic and Hamitic, were strongly influenced by them, but later on these latter passed in great part—and in the case of the Indo-Europeans almost 'wholly—to the sedentary life. In northern Asia, on the contrary, we still find many of the Uralo-Altaic peoples in the state of shepherd nomads, retaining, along with their economic regime, a large part at least of their social organisation and primitive religion. It is precisely among these last that we find also some very definite ideas about the adversary of the Supreme Being as we know him already from the most ancient civilisations.

In a myth of the Yakuts, who live at the north-eastern extremity of Siberia, the origin of the earth is thus described. In the beginning the earth was entirely covered with water and nothing was to be seen but a boundless sea. Ai-tojon, the Supreme Being, hovering over the waters, sees a sort of bubble floating about, from which there issues a voice. So he asks: "Who are you, and where do you come from?" "I am the devil and I live on the earth that is under the waters." "If it is true that there is earth there," says Ai-tojon, "bring me a bit of it." The devil dives down and comes back with a quantity of earth. Ai-tojon takes it, blesses it, and lies down on it. Seeing this, the devil tries to drown him, starting to pull the floating islet about so as to make it sink. But the more he works at it the more it grows, to his great discomfiture; until at last it covers almost all the water. And thus was formed the earth on which men live today.¹

According to another Yakut myth the creator makes the earth small and beautiful and smooth. Then the evil spirit comes and begins to tear at it like a dog so as to destroy it. The creator sees him, but lets him go on; and while the evil spirit pursues his task the earth does not cease to grow and the rivers and seas

¹ UNO HOLMBERG, *The Mythology of all Races*, vol. iv; *Finn-Ugric, Siberian* (Boston, 1927), p. 313; L. WALK, *Mitteilungen der Anthropol. Gesellschaft in Wien* (1933), lxxiii, pp. 72-3, No. 22 (see the whole article: "Die Verbreitung des Tauchmotivs in den Urmeerschöpfungs- (und Sintflut-) Sagen. A. Das europäische Gebeit," *ibid.*, pp. 60-76). From this point on we give more detailed references because we shall be concerned with subjects treated in the still unpublished volumes of the *UdG.*, the manuscript of which has been kindly put at our disposal by the author.

emerge from the cracks he makes. Thus he contributes, in spite of himself, to give the earth its present size and form.¹

In a myth of the Tartars of the Altai (and indeed very widespread in Siberia) the story of the creation of the earth is told as follows. In the beginning there was nothing but water; no earth, no sky, no moon, no sun. The creator with "a man" hovers over the sea, each in the form of a black goose. The man arouses the wind and throws some water on to the creator; but he falls and is almost drowned. The creator saves him; and then commands a hard stone to arise from the water, and the man sits down on it. The creator then tells him to plunge to the bottom of the sea and bring up a piece of earth, and out of this he makes the dry land. When, at the creator's command, the man dives a second time, he gathers two handfuls of earth one of which he puts into his mouth to form a separate land of his own; and he gives only the other handful to the creator. While the latter is still engaged in forming his world the earth hidden in the man's mouth begins to swell, and almost chokes him. At last he can no longer conceal his fraud. At the creator's orders he is obliged to spit out what he has in his mouth. Thence came the mountains and marshes (i.e. those parts of the earth that are least agreeable to nomadic shepherds, who need wide and open steppes for their pasturages, especially for horses). Then the creator says to the man: "You are now in a state of sin. You wanted to do me an ill turn. Your name shall be *Erlık*, and those men who also harbour evil thoughts shall be your people, but the good men shall be my people."²

This myth contains several motifs commonly found in Siberia: a being who is (or becomes) the adversary of the creator is compelled to dive into the waters to seek for earth; he essays a fraud, but never succeeds in keeping what he hides and in forming a separate world; he is forced to spit; and hence come all the ugliest and least useful parts of the earth.³

In a myth of the Buriats, another Siberian tribe, the wicked

¹ HOLMBERG, op. cit., p. 319; OSKAR DÄHNHARDT, *Natursagen*, vol. i (Leipzig and Berlin, 1907), p. 73; JOSEPH FELDMANN, *Paradies und Sündenfall* (Münster i. W., 1913), p. 376.

² W. RADLOFF, *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, vol. i (St. Petersburg, 1866), pp. 175-7; W. RADLOFF, *Aus Sibirien*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 3-4; FELDMANN, op. cit., pp. 361-2; HOLMBERG, op. cit., 317-18; WALK, loc. cit., pp. 72-3, No. 16.

³ Cf. DÄHNHARDT, op. cit., pp. 60-2, 66-8, 70-4, 338-9; FELDMANN, op. cit., pp. 370-2, 374, 377-80, 383-4; HOLMBERG, op. cit., pp. 313-20, 325; WALK, loc. cit., especially pp. 70-3 (Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 17, 21-4, 28); *UdG.*, vi, 36-42, 568-70.

one, in compensation for the work he has to do in going to the bottom of the sea, asks for a part of the earth—enough at any rate to enable him to plant his staff in it. Having obtained this, he makes a hole with his staff and thence emerge snakes, mice, and other noxious animals.¹

The evil spirit also plays a fatal part in *the creation of man*. A myth that is widespread in Siberia, especially amongst the Tartars of the south, gives the story of man's creation as follows. The creator makes a man out of a mass of earth. Then he proceeds to make a naked dog (i.e. a dog without hair), and orders him to stand guard over the human body (which still lacks a soul), while he goes away. The creator departs. Ngaa, his adversary (who is death personified), comes along and says to the dog: "You are cold because you are naked. Give me the man and I will provide you with a coat." After a brief resistance the animal yields. Ngaa takes the man and devours him. The creator returns and asks the dog: "Where is the man?" The animal answers: "Ngaa has eaten him." The creator becomes angry and says: "Because you have allowed that to happen, from now on you shall eat human excrements." Then he sets about the creation of man all over again, and forms a man and a woman who become the parents of the whole human race.²

Other variants of this myth have a somewhat different ending. Here for example is that current among the Mordvins, a Siberian people who are now more or less sedentary, but who originally belonged to the nomadic shepherds. (In this myth, the adversary of the Supreme Being goes by the Arabic name of Shaïtan, in which we may recognise a Mussulman influence, but the myth is at bottom original.) Tscham-Pas, the creator, after forming the human body of slime, confides it to the care of a dog, who is, once more, naked. Shaïtan thereupon causes a terrible cold so that the dog almost perishes. He thus succeeds in persuading the animal to accept a hairy coat and to surrender the human body in exchange. Shaïtan then spits on the man from every side, and from the drops of spittle arise all sorts of diseases. Finally he breathes into him an evil soul. Tscham-Pas returns. He drives Shaïtan away, and to heal the human body he takes the exterior parts soiled by Shaïtan's spittle and turns them inwards; and

¹ HOLMBERG, op. cit., p. 315; variants: *ibid.*, p. 320; *UdG.*, vi, 570.

² *UdG.*, iii, 354-5; cf. vi, 47.

breathes a good soul into the man. But the diseases remain, and because the man has now two souls, one good and one bad, his inclinations are partly good and partly bad.¹

We see then that this form of the myth is more "philosophical", since it explains the origin of physical and moral evil by the intervention of an evil being who spoils the work of the creator. To make up for it, the first variant seems to contain an allusion to the origin of death, since it is *Ngaa*, death, who devours the first man.²

There is also a story in which the evil Erlik seduces men and makes them eat a forbidden fruit; but this myth is so similar to the Biblical account at several points that it is better not to rely on it; in spite of the fact that it contains other details of unquestionably Siberian origin.³

It may perhaps be felt that the last two examples tend to throw a certain suspicion on the whole argument. It could be objected moreover that the mention throughout Siberia of an adversary of the good God is due to Christian or Islamic influences.⁴ But evidently that would be going too far. There are variants of a Christian or Islamic colour (sometimes also Manichæan or Buddhist); but the main fabric of the story consists almost always of details quite different from those that are found in the Bible. The same answer would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the theory that would derive these ideas from the old Iranian religion and its dualism.⁵

The antagonism between the good God and his adversary pervades the whole religion of the old Turk peoples. Shamanism, with its bizarre practices, is in close touch with the evil being; whereas in the worship of the Supreme Being there is no Shamanism properly so-called ("black Shamanism"), but simply a priesthood exercised originally by the father of the family.⁶

One proof of the antiquity and originality of these ideas is that

¹ DÄHNHARDT, op. cit., pp. 101-2; FELDMANN, op. cit., pp. 380-1.

² On this myth and its variants see: DÄHNHARDT, op. cit., pp. 98-110, 340; FELDMANN, op. cit., pp. 371, 372, 374-8, 385-6; HOLMBERG, op. cit., pp. 373-9; *UdG.*, vi, 47-51.

³ RADLOFF, *Proben der Volksliteratur*, vol. i, pp. 177-80; FELDMANN, op. cit., pp. 362-4; HOLMBERG, op. cit., pp. 381-3. Other stories of a fall of the first men, but without the intervention of the devil, in HOLMBERG, op. cit., pp. 383-5.

⁴ See HOLMBERG, op. cit., pp. 313-14.

⁵ See DÄHNHARDT, op. cit., pp. 36-8, 107-10; HOLMBERG, op. cit., p. 379; see also pp. 315-16, 321-2.

⁶ *UdG.*, xiii (manuscript).

the name Erlik, or its etymologically cognate forms, occurs almost everywhere in Siberia, and even beyond its frontiers (among the Mongols), while the myths referring to this personage are highly differentiated. Thus among some groups there is no longer any opposition in principle or in the moral order between the Supreme Being and Erlik; the latter is simply the prince of the subterranean world, while the former lives in heaven. Elsewhere, these two have even become associates, allies, brothers. But detailed analysis of the myths in question shows that this is a case of decadence, of later changes, due in part to the infiltration of a lunar mythology not belonging as of right to the nomadic shepherds. Parallel with these mythological modifications, the *cult* of the evil being develops on a large scale; sacrifices are offered to appease him since, although he is not much revered, his wickedness is feared. The animals offered him are preferably black in colour, while white are preferred for the worship of the Supreme Being who resides in the heavens, whose kingdom is in the light.¹

We have chosen here a few of those myths in which, on the one hand, the opposition between the Supreme Being and his adversary is most clearly marked, and whose resemblance on the other to the myths of North America is the more easily recognisable. A very important group of myths connecting these two civilisations consists of accounts of creation in which it becomes necessary to *plunge* in order to seek for earth (*Tauchmotiv*). In the American myths, however, the evil being comes on the scene only during or after the formation of the earth; while in those of the nomadic shepherds he is present from the beginning and often plunges of himself to seek earth.² It is clear that the central idea of this cycle of myths cannot possibly have been derived from the Biblical account of creation. For the rest, even if some doubt remains about the Biblical or original character of some particular trait in the myths of the nomadic shepherds of Siberia, the American myths, with this strange personage Coyote (and corresponding beings) are evidently autochthonous; and the resemblances between them and the Asiatic myths clearly show that their origin must be sought in the primitive Arctic-American civilisation.

¹ All this is treated at length in vols. ix to xiii of *UdG.* (manuscript).

² *UdG.*, vi, 32-42.

CONCLUSION

This summary exposé—too summary for the importance of the subject, but all we can manage in our allotted space—may help us to see how the problem of the origin of evil already haunted the minds of the primitives.¹ This problem becomes particularly acute in a monotheistic religion which admits a good and all-powerful and creative God. (A plurality of higher beings who are morally indifferent or even immoral allows of an easier but more superficial solution.) It is therefore not astonishing that among many primitive peoples who believe in one sole and good God, the problem of the origin of evil, physical and moral, has remained unsolved. There are other peoples, however, who have been brought to a standstill by it. Convinced of the existence of a Supreme Being, so good that only good can come from him, they have found the explanation of the multiple imperfections and deficiencies of this world in the existence of an evil being who has spoilt the creator's work; and in their myths they tell the story of his fatal intervention in a way that is doubtless naïve, but often also very moving.

But a new problem is thus posed: whence comes the evil being? Is he independent of the creator? There, too, we have noted fumbling attempts to deal with the difficulty, but they are far from successful. We need not be surprised at that; in the presence of the *mysterium iniquitatis* we may divine all the limitations of the human intelligence, for which a revelation is morally necessary. In default of that we cannot but lose our way when we go in quest of the supreme solutions.

JOSEPH HENNINGER, S.V.D.

¹ This subject has been treated in a thesis, unfortunately not yet published, by KARL ALTDORFER, *Der Ursprung der Sünde in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung* (Fribourg in Switzerland, 1943).

A NOTE ON THE MAZDEAN DUALISM

NO ACCOUNT of Iranian dualism—i.e. that of Mazdeism, since Manichaeism is of totally different inspiration and was never the national religion of Iran—is given by simply extracting a kind of “average” view from the Iranian religious texts, that is to say, from the Avesta, the Achaemenid inscriptions, and the Pahlavi books. It is precisely when they touch on dualism and the character of the Arch-demon that these texts, apparently in continuity with each other, reveal divergencies that go so deep that the problem of their relative chronology is inevitably raised. Without going here into the detail of these laborious and often misleading researches, we would simply sketch the steps of the evolution as they would appear to us to have been.

We may recall that the oldest literature, that of the Avesta, full of gaps as it is especially when compared with its rich Indian sister, is chiefly made up of a collection of hymns (the Yashts) to the old divinities of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, of a series of gnomic poems attributed to Zarathustra himself, of the Gāthās, which occur in a ritual (the Yasna), and finally of some books of exorcisms, the Videvat and the Visprat. As to the Pahlavi books, written in a language which is the immediate ancestor of modern Persian and of much later date, they have, nevertheless, preserved for us many elements that are often very ancient.

The oldest Yashts sing of gods, perhaps of “great gods” in the sense in which the ethnologists use the term, who almost all have an equivalent in the Indian Veda. In these hymns as well as in the Veda we stand in the presence not only of gods but also of demons, the adversaries of the gods. The vocabulary applied to them in India is very far from being clear and fixed. Asura is a name that is preferably, but not exclusively, applied to baneful beings, but nothing is said about the origin or perpetuity of these powers of evil. In the Gāthās, on the contrary, there is but one supreme god, Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord (“ahura”), surrounded by six entities who represent aspects of his various powers

concerned with the cosmos and with human society. Later on these "aspects" will become primordial creatures, "archangels". For the moment they coexist with two "spirits", one good ("spenta manyu") and one bad ("ahra manyu"), "twins" in the beginning, whose fundamental opposition to each other is a capital doctrine of Zoroastrianism. These spirits have opted, one for good and the other for evil; but we know nothing whatever about their condition prior to the choice. In the train of the bad spirit come the daevas (here clearly malicious) and certain men. Their choice is free; it does not come from any necessity of their nature, and would seem to be reversible. But very soon, as early as the Videvat and constantly in the Pahlavi books, the evil one appears as an immutable "nature", the principle of a counter-creation, which begins to set itself over against the creation of Ahura Mazda (Ohrmazd) and to thwart it. Ahra Manyu (Ahriman), we are told, was from the beginning the enemy of Ohrmazd, living far removed from his lights. Drawing near, he was filled with envy, and undertook the conquest of the Sphere of Light. In order to stop him, Ohrmazd created the world to serve as a kind of army of defence, and this was answered by the whole cohort of evil creatures.

Let us bring out the main particulars of this set and stylised cosmic dualism:

(1) It is resolutely creationist; the reverse in that respect of the Gnostic emanationism.

(2) Matter is not the principle of evil. Both in the order of good and in the order, or rather disorder, of evil, the spiritual and the material exist side by side.

(3) Good and bad beings coexist in promiscuity in a world which is the universe of the good, but is infested with the creatures of evil.

(4) Against the demons is set the power of exorcisms, of sacramental purifications, of sacrifices, but also of moral action; and it is good that will ultimately prevail when the world shall be purged by fire of all daemonic interference.

History has, therefore, a direction and an aim. But it has been questioned whether what we have here is not some kind of amended version of the original plan of Ohrmazd to succour his

disordered creation. Since orthodoxy increasingly insists on affirming, on the one side, the almighty power and omniscience of God, and, on the other, the *natural* (no longer voluntary) character of evil and the evil ones, it should bring back the economy of salvation, one would think, to the *original* designs of God. Then it will teach that the creatures of Ohrmazd were preconformed so as to be able to maintain the struggle against the evil offspring of Ahriman, and to overcome them within a given time, which would be that of the history of the world. Evil, albeit independent of God as regards its nature and activity, does not escape the grasp of the divine knowledge or divine providence; and this is the clearest mark of its inferiority. But the texts never rise to the point of saying that evil is *permitted* by God *for the sake of a higher good*: some of them speak at most of an attempt at conciliation, of a pact offered but refused, under the terms of which the evil one, submitting to Ohrmazd, becomes his ally and collaborator in the conduct of the world. Such a myth attests that these texts do not resign themselves to a world envisaged as orientated exclusively towards the destruction of evil, and suggesting, on the other hand, that the demon is not so irremediably fixed in evil that no idea of withdrawing him from it could ever be entertained. Should he remain sunk in it, however, till the end of time, he will not be annihilated but simply rendered powerless. Once the evil creatures have been expelled from the world of good, nothing remains for the good ones but to be transfigured in a universal "restoration". The resurrection and glorification of the body mark once more the abyss that separates Mazdeism from the Manichaeian anti-hylism.

These vacillations are inherent in the fundamental datum of the dualism we have to do with here.¹ "Whether consciously or otherwise, all substantialisation of evil involves a certain subordination of good with respect to evil; and the Mazdean doctrine of creation brings this out in a vivid way. Since no good creature, any more than God himself, could be the principle of evil, recourse must needs be had, if sin is to be explained, to another first Principle which, if it cannot touch God directly, can get a hold on his creation; can even specify, negatively indeed but very really,

¹ Perhaps I may be allowed to reproduce here what I wrote in my edition of the *Shkand Gumānik Vitchār* (*The final solution of Doubts*), *A Mazdean apologetic work of the Ninth Century* (Collectanea Friburgensia fasc. xxx, Fribourg, Librairie de l'Université, 1945, p. 85).

its activities, and so also its nature. The world will then appear as an organ maintained by God for the express purpose of evicting evil. In this sense it can be said that it is evil that finalises good and forces itself on the creative omnipotence in the shape of a motive. So also the creature, the proper effect of the divine goodness, is stamped no doubt with the likeness of that goodness, but bears on it still more clearly the stamp of the antagonism that gave it birth and constitutes its whole *raison d'être*, since it has no other end than the confrontation of evil." Hence the essentially militant character of the Mazdean religion.

But on the other hand, it is striking to find that in the Gāthās the evil Principle is not on the same plane as the supreme God. It stands on a lower level, face to face with the Good Spirit, whose relation to Ahura Mazda is far from being clear. The same scheme is found again in a doctrine, also Iranian but of obscure origin, which was developed on the fringes of the official Mazdeism, not without contaminating it here and there, and which is commonly called Zervanism. The supreme God (Zervan, Kronos) simultaneously generates Ohrmazd and Ahriman, the one in virtue of his merits and the other because of his "doubt". If Ahriman here appears on the same level as Ohrmazd that is because the latter is now reduced to the rank of a kind of demiurge. It looks as if this "arriviste" evil, with its pretensions to equality with the good, had here come up against a natural impossibility. Its secondary or parasitical character is not to be effaced.

To the extent to which the voluntary and spontaneous character of evil, asserted in the Gāthās, is clouded over, to the extent to which Ahriman becomes "nature", to that extent he loses his spirituality: his laggard and backward knowledge leaves him without resources to outwit the strategy of Ohrmazd. It is found to be even unthinkable that the creatures of the good God can be fixed in evil for ever, were it only the evil of punishment. On the question of the eternity of hell, Mazdeism is in downright opposition to the various Biblical monotheisms (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). Man's liberty is more and more clearly affirmed against all the Islamic tendencies to fatalism.

The Iranian arch-demon is surrounded by a rather miscellaneous troop of minor demons, some of whom bear the names of ancient Indian divinities: a sort of terminological general post for which up to now no fully satisfying explanation has been offered. It is one

of the most baffling problems in the history of religions. How does a divinity come to be transformed into a demon, into an antagonist? The reply is often made: by being envisaged as appertaining exclusively to a foreign or hostile community and supporting its interests as patron. But it is just the occurrence of this conversion, making something appear strange and false that was formerly true and familiar, that has to be explained. Now we know nothing of the separation of the branches of the Indo-Iranian trunk, and, on the other hand, the rigid and almost mechanical dualism of the ritual books and of the belated theology of Iran has no true equivalent in India.

We may note especially that the theme of the struggle—theomachia or gigantomachia—is presented otherwise in Iran than in Babylonia, or even in the Indian epic. It is no longer based on any of the ordinary contraries—spirit-matter, unity-multiplicity, gods-demons, heaven-earth, male-female—but on a radical opposition, on the division of good and evil as such. Doubtless these two are represented by two personal and spiritual principles; but it is none the less true that the evil principle is evil only because he has chosen evil. Even when this primordial choice has more or less faded out of sight, even when a very commonplace spirit of systematisation and an obsession for purificatory magic have “organised” the rival universes, even then it will be moral evil chiefly that characterises the evil one. He is the spirit who lies and deceives, who pollutes and destroys. The conception of his activity as “disorder” and “accident” is so much the purer as it is the more abstract. The Manichaean imagery drinks of muddier springs: it is not at all impossible that we catch a glimpse through it of a popular Iranianism which has left no traces behind in the official Mazdean literature—or in such scraps of it as we have.

In the use of the comparative method no great historical importance can be attached to particular analogies; what is significant is not the presence of this or that same element here and there, but the whole structure into which it is integrated. To be able to say, for example, that the Satan of the Book of Job is of Mesopotamian or Iranian “origin” we should not only have to solve a few problems in chronology, but also to find certain specific traits in his character. Now the notion of a first rebel to oppose himself to God and seduce or tempt His creatures is current among too many widely different peoples to allow us to make it the sole basis of an

historical parallel, even between neighbouring nations. The need to explain the entry of evil into a world which is the work of a good and almighty God leads easily to the imagination, *to begin with*, of the commission of a first sin by a first sinner, opening the way *afterwards* to an explanation of this "first" in the created order by a more radically primordial First, anterior to creation—in so far, that is, as the notion of creation itself is clear. But it is only rarely that thought decides to *choose* between these two "systems". Even in act of seeking a first cause on which to base itself in substantified evil, it dimly and intermittently perceives that evil can never claim priority over or equality with good. Its indecision is a muddled way of affirming the thing that it fails to formulate straightaway and abstractly, namely that evil has no *proper* cause. The personification of the evil principle in Iran and the inner tensions of the Mazdean theology only serve to bring this out the more clearly. If the world of evil was there made symmetrical with the world of good, this was only in appearance and in the interests of a belated systematisation, very superficial and wholly popular. The ritual does battle "locally" with the little impure demons, those of diseases and pollutions; but the wise, even when avowed and militant dualists, do not question the supremacy of the good God. The personality with which the principle of evil is invested is "inherited" from a created and secondary personality, that of the bad spirit, inferior and posterior to the creative God. The Manichaean anti-God is more *original*, being above all things hylic. He gains in solidity and subsistence all that he loses in "malign specificity"—which does not prevent him from appropriating certain traits from the Mazdean Ahriman. This latter, more moral in his rebellion as in his antagonism, squares better in the end with the very pure conception of the divine transcendence formed by the Zarathustra of the Gāthās. It is in virtue especially of that, far more than of episodic and peripheral contacts between Iran and Israel, that he shows his resemblance to the Evil One of the Biblical Revelation.

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS IN HIS KINGDOM

Canst thou deliver me from the void abyss,
The gulf of night that is but consuming
And torture, and woundings unto death,
Where no help is, nor any friend at all?

Never, oh never there, is any help,
All is full of darkness. . . .
Full of prisons without issue,
For him who enters only blows and wounds.

Parched with drought, burnt up with scorching wind
No green leaf is to be found there.
Who shall deliver me from all these griefs,
Who shall save me from anguish infernal?

And still I cry: Oh, were I freed from these
And the creatures that tear each other and devour,
And the bodies of men, the birds of the air,
The fish of the sea, the beasts and the demons,
Who shall free me from these—
From the destroying Hells without turning or issue?

Manichæan Psalm from Turfan.

WE SHALL try, in this article, to analyse the figure of the Manichæan devil. Difficulties face us from the outset, since the Manichæan system can be formulated in two different sets of terms, the first conceptual and abstract, the second mythological; and since this mythological version itself can take on different forms according as we deal with one of the primitive expressions of the system, or with one of its later adaptations adjusted to the vocabulary and beliefs of the various peoples to which its missionary efforts extended.¹ In passing from the conceptual to the mythological plane we may recognise under different names what is fundamentally the same thing, but the equivalences are far from answering

¹ Cf. the important memoir of H. H. SCHAEFER, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*, in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1924-5 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1927), pp. 65-157.

always to a strict identity. Displacements occur, and there is a shift in the mutual relations between this or that concept and this or that mythological personage supposed to embody it. And when we pass from one field of missionary effort to another we may find that this or that mythical hypostasis no longer corresponds to this other one, which is, nevertheless, presumed to be its counterpart. Thus it is with the Prince of Darkness.

The Manichaean dualism rests, as we know, on the absolute opposition of two substances, Natures or Roots, of two principles, both uncreated and infinite, consequently co-eternal and equal, and wholly incompatible; Good and Evil, God and Matter. But owing to the type of thought that gave it birth, and whatever the pretensions of its author in this respect, Manichaeism never succeeded in maintaining this opposition on the strictly rational plane nor in seizing and formulating its terms in a purely conceptual way. The two principles are just as fundamentally designated as Light and Darkness, and imagined as two forces whose natures are defined by their direction, as two physical masses, extended and extensible, with fields determined by their spatial extension. Thus while Good goes always towards the heights, pushing out to infinity in the directions of the north and east and west, Evil, on the other hand, or Matter, which at bottom is pure unco-ordinated or disorderly movement,¹ tends always to the depths, and has no unlimited and free extension save towards the south. These two infinitudes, the one extending in three directions, and the other in one alone, mutually obstruct each other at the point of junction, so that the luminous mass is bounded downwards and the dark mass upwards, on which side it is compressed in a kind of "wedge" and hemmed in by the Light on three sides.² Let us picture two gaseous masses, one of

¹ On this conception of Matter, of capital importance as we shall see, consult ALEXANDER OF LYCOPOLIS, *Contra Manichaei opiniones*, 2, pp. 5, 8, Brinkmann's edition, and 6, pp. 10, 5 and 24. Cf. SERAPION OF THMUIS, *Adv. Manichaeos*, xxxi, 8-9, p. 47, Casey's edition; and TITUS OF BOSTRA, *Adv. Manich.*, i, pp. 15-20 and 27. The expression "disorderly movement" (*ataktos kinêsis*) used by ALEXANDER OF LYCOPOLIS (cf. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 30A, and HERMOGENES, in HIPPOLYTUS, *Elenchos*, viii, 4, 17) is confirmed by SHAHRASTĀNĪ (*Religionspartheien*, i, p. 286, trans. Haarbrücker), and by the fragment from Turfan, M 33 (*S.P.A.W.* (1934), p. 876).

² The chief references on all these points are to be found in F. C. BAUR, *Das manichäische Religionssystem* (Tübingen, 1831), pp. 26-8, or in P. ALFARIC, *L'évolution intellectuelle de Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1918), pp. 98-9. The image of the "wedge" comes from St. AUGUSTINE, *Contra Faustum*, iv, 2: "quasi non ita terram luminis describatis ex una parte a terra gentis tenebrarum, tamquam cuneo coartato dississam." This theory of the boundlessness and of the relative limitation of the

which, driven on by its own immanent and incoherent dynamism, happens at some chance stage of its dilatation to encounter the other, and then seeks to penetrate it and at last combine with it ever more and more indissolubly and to absorb it entirely into itself. That is what happens in the opening episode of the Manichæan myth. The Darkness, as the upshot of a casual accumulation of chaotic agitations and intestine revolutions, reaches the upper limit of its empire and, attracted by the splendour of the Realm of Light, of which it now attains a glimpse, makes an attack on the latter and, having overcome it, engulfs a certain part of the divine substance; thus initiating a kind of mixture of the two Natures originally standing in separation. Let us borrow another analogy from Manichæism itself.¹ Since it places the essence of Matter in unruly and brutal concupiscence quite as much as in disorderly physical movement, we may compare the Light with clear consciousness and the Darkness with repressed desire developing freely in the night of unconsciousness or semi-consciousness. This desire surges up towards the level of consciousness, breaks through the barriers opposed by the latter and troubles its serenity and equilibrium. The dark fumes of Evil tend to invade and occupy the field of lucid thought and to absorb it more and more into itself. Such, in the microcosm, is the mechanism of temptation and—if consent should follow—of sin. Such, in the macrocosm, is the progressive deployment of the powers of Darkness.

The Manichæan conception of Matter, however, undergoes other mythical transpositions, and this time into a register of a more static character. The Darkness is now imagined under the form of a Tree—the Tree of Evil or of Death opposed to the Tree of Goodness or of Life²—or again under the form of a relatively stable expanse spreading out in successive terraces towards the

luminous and dark worlds may be compared with certain Mazdean theories (cf. H. S. NYBERG in *Journal Asiatique*, ccxiv, 1929, p. 209, and ccxix (1931), p. 226).

¹ Cf. the Chinese Manichæan treatise translated by E. CHAVANNES and P. PELLIOU in the *Journal Asiatique* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), pp. 546-8.

² Cf. THEODORET, *Haer. fab. comp.*, i, 26 (P. G. 83, 378b) and especially the Manichæan document cited by Severus of Antioch in Homily 123 (M. A. KUGENER and FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, ii (Brussels, 1912), pp. 96, 102-5, 112, 117-18, 125). The image is of complex origin—Biblical, Gnostic and Babylonian (cf. KUGENER-CUMONT, *op. cit.*, p. 164); but it comes essentially of a mythical and dualist interpretation—undoubtedly borrowed in part from Marcion—of the Gospel parable of the “good tree” and the “bad tree” (Matt. vii, 17-19; Luke vi. 43-4; and add Matt. iii. 10, xii. 33 and xv. 13).

south of the region occupied by the Light, and having a topography and divisions that can be explored and established.¹ It is a land boundless in length and depth, black and pestilential, the complete antithesis of the Shining Realm, perfumed and blissful, which overhangs it from infinite heights; a hell, in short, the infernal replica of Paradise.² Here is a somewhat less summary taken from a Manichaean writing cited by Ibn an-Nadīm.³

“The Realm of Darkness, so Mani teaches, is cut up by deep gulfs, abysses, pits, quagmires, dikes, fens, and pools, into expanses of land divided and split up by long stretches filled with thick forest interspersed with vents which from region to region and from dike to dike send up a smoky exhalation; while afar off, from region to region and from dike to dike, arise columns of fire and smoky cloud. One part of it lies higher, the other lower. The smoke that goes up from it is the poison of Death. It rises from a pit whose bottom seethes with turbid mud covered over with a layer of dust, the receptacle of the elements of Fire, of the heavy and dismal elements of Wind, of the elements of turbid Water.”

This rugged land, puckered into muddy cracks and—to borrow a detail from elsewhere⁴—bristling with mountains, this vast desolate expanse, overrun with poisonous exhalations, where,

¹ On the disposition and composition of the two worlds of Light and Darkness I refer, to simplify the matter, to the texts of Theodore bar Kōnāi (translated and commented by FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, i (Brussels, 1909), pp. 7-13), of Ibn an-Nadīm (translated and annotated by G. FLÜGEL, *Mani* (Leipzig, 1862), pp. 86-8, 93-4, 177-208, 271-8) and of St. Augustine (noted and utilised, along with the testimony of other authors, by P. ALFARIC, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-101). Other accounts will be found in H. J. POLOTSKY, *Abriss des manichäischen Systems* (=PAULY-WISSOWA, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, supplementary vol. vi), (Stuttgart, 1934), cols. 249, 14-254, 47, or in H. JONAS, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, i (Gottingen, 1934), pp. 287-93.

² It is the “tenebrarum terra”, the “terra pestifera”, opposed by the Fundamental Epistle to the “Lucida et beata terra” (ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Epist. Fundam.*, 15), the “Black” or “Shadowy Land” of the Turfan texts (M 98, edited by F. W. K. MULLER, in *A.P.A.W.* (1904), ix, p. 40, and by A. V. W. JACKSON, *Researches in Manichaeism* (New York, 1932), p. 32. Cf. Theodore bar Kōnāi, in FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, p. 11: “Le Roi des Ténébres réside dans sa terre ténébreuse.”

³ *Fihrist*, p. 94, trans. FLÜGEL. Another translation in K. KESSLER, *Mani* (Berlin, 1889), pp. 397-8.

⁴ From *Kephalaia* (ch. vi), a collection of conversations—real or fictitious—between Mani and his disciples, discovered in 1931 at Medinet Mâdi in Egypt.

wrapped in perpetual fog, amidst the horrors of yawning gulfs and wooded depths, shimmer the sinister lights of the marsh,¹ is divided into five "members", disposed in five superposed regions. These five "worlds" (Syr., "ālmīn"; Gr. and Coptic, "kosmoī"), which here once more correspond in symmetrical antithesis with the five "members" or "abodes" (Syr., "š'khīnāthā") of the Realm of Light (Intelligence, Reason, Thought, Reflection and Will), or more especially with the five parts of the Luminous Earth (Ether or Air, Wind, Light, Water, Fire), are, in descending order from highest to lowest: (1) the world of Smoke; (2) the world of Fire; (3) the world of Wind; (4) the world of Water; and (5) the world of Darkness, taken in its more restricted sense.²

This is the same enumeration as that of *Kephalaia* (vi). It may also be found elsewhere, notably in the following texts, the first cited by St. Augustine from the Fundamental Epistle of Mani himself, the other by a Syriac writer, Theodore bar Kōnai, following some writing of the sect:

"Juxta unam vero partem ac latus inlustris illius ac sanctae terrae [The Earth of Light] erat tenebrarum terra profunda et immensa magnitudine, in qua habitabant ignea corpora, genera scilicet pestifera. Hic infinitae tenebrae ex eadem manantes natura inaestimabiles cum propriis fetibus; ultra quas erant aquae caenosae ac turbidae cum suis inhabitatoribus; quarum interius venti horribiles ac vehementes cum suo principe et genitoribus. Rursum regio ignea et corruptibilis cum suis ducibus et nationibus. Pari more introrsum gens caliginis ac fumi plena, in qua morabatur immanis princeps omnium et dux habens circa se innumerabiles principes, quorum omnium ipse erat mens atque origo: haeque fuerunt naturae quinque terrae pestiferae".³

¹Cf. the similar description of the "palace of the Demons" in the Chinese Hymnary of London, str. 20-3 (*A.P.A.W.* (1926), iv, p. 101, or *B.S.O.A.S.*, xi (1943), p. 177).

²Some of these five elements are presented in the Arabian sources in a slightly different form. Consult, for example, E. CHAVANNES and P. PELLIER, in the *Journal Asiatique* (Nov.-Dec., 1911), p. 511, or H. J. POLOTSKY, *Abriss*, col. 249, 59-66. Five bad elements (muddy water, opposed to clear water, opaque darkness opposed to brilliant light, violent wind opposed to pleasant breeze, destructive fire opposed to quickening fire, this body of nothingness opposed to the soul, to the pure Mana) are set out in the *Mandaean Book of John*.

³ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Epist. Fundam.*, 15.

"The King of Darkness dwells in his dark earth, in his five worlds: the world of Smoke, the world of Fire, the world of Wind, the world of Water, the world of Darkness".¹

To which we may add the testimony of St. Augustine:

"Haec dixi, ut, si fieri potest, tandem dicere desinatis malum esse terram per immensum profundam et longam; malum esse mentem per terram vagantem; malum esse quinque antra elementorum, aliud tenebris, aliud aquis, aliud ventis, aliud igni, aliud fumo plenum".²

"Quinque enim elementa, quae genuerunt principes proprios, genti tribuunt (sc. Manichaei) tenebrarum, eaque elementa his nominibus nuncupant, fumum, tenebras, ignem, aquam, ventum".³

"Novimus enim tenebras, a quas, ventos, ignem, fumum".⁴

The five "elements" of Smoke, Fire, Wind, Water and Darkness issue respectively from the five "chambers", "depots" or "storehouses" (Gr. and Copt., "tamieia"),⁵ from the five "gulfs", "cracks" or "caverns" (Lat. and Gr., "antra"),⁶ and so from the cavities with which the Realm of Darkness is riddled throughout. From them in their turn have sprung five trees ("Ipsas autem arbores [ibidem natas] ex quinque illis elementis

¹ THEODORE BAR KŌNĀI, *Scholies*, xi, in FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, p. 11, n. 4.

² *De moribus eccl. cathol. et de moribus Manichaeorum*, ii, ix, 14; P. L. 32, 1351.

³ *De haer.*, 46; P. L. 42, 35.

⁴ *Con. Epist. Fundam.*, 31.

⁵ *Tamieia*, an embarrassing term with various meanings, only to be translated approximately. Should we here perhaps recall the "four depots" (*Nirāmīsā tchahār*) established in four worlds above the "Black" or "Dark World", according to the Turfan fragment M 98, and called in another fragment, M 472, "the abode of the Demons"? (cf. A. V. W. JACKSON, *Researches in Manichaeism*, pp. 32 and 50, n. 39). The five *Tamieia* (Smoke, Fire, Wind, Water and Darkness) are found again in the *Psalter* of the Fayoum (*Ps. cxxiii*, pp. 9, 17-19). Add *Kephāl.*, xxiii and xxiv, and the passage from Simplicius cited in the next note.

⁶ SIMPLICIUS, in *Epict. enchirid.*, xxvii, pp. 71, 18, ed. Dübner: "kaī gar kaī ta pente tamieia ōs antra tina hypothēntai"; ST. AUGUSTINE, *De mor. eccl. cathol. et de mor. Manich.* ii, ix, 1; P. L. xxxii, 1351: "quinque antra elementorum"; the Turfan fragment, M 98 (JACKSON, *Researches*, pp. 32 and 48, n. 35): "panz kandar 'i marg", "five caverns of death"; the Chinese treatise called the Chavannes-Pelliot: "gulfs of darkness" (*J.A.* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), p. 511), "five gulfs" (p. 514), "quintuple gulfs, dark, non-luminous" (p. 558; corrected translation, *J.A.* (March-April, 1913), p. 383), "dark non-luminous caverns" (p. 561); the Chinese hymnary of London, str. 21: "auch den fünffachen Graben des Reichs der Finsternis und die fünf giftigen Höfe der Dunkelheit" (trans. WALDSCHMIDT-LENTZ, *A.P.A.W.* (1926), iv, p. 101), "also the five-graded pit of the world of Darkness, also the five poisonous enclosures of Lightlessness" (trans. TSUI CHI, *B.S.O.A.S.*, xi (1943), p. 177).

[Manichaei opinantur exortas]”, says St. Augustine,¹ echoing *Kephalaïon*, vi). Into these five trees is divided and multiplied the Tree of Evil or of Death, a symbol, as already mentioned, of matter.² The same image will appear later on in the course of the development of the cosmogonic myth: the “sin”, that is to say the seed, of the Archons, though destined to be overcome in the end, begins, when it falls on the dry part of our present earth, “to germinate in the form of five trees”,³ and, since the microcosm corresponds exactly to the macrocosm, five trees will equally go to make up our own private inner hells, the evil nature or the “old man” which constitutes our carnal condition and holds in captivity the good and divine elements primordially torn away from the Realm of Light by the diabolic powers.

“The demon [says a Manichaean treatise translated into Chinese,⁴] conceives feelings poisoned with envy; and he shuts up the five luminous natures in a carnal body, fashioning it into a little universe (microcosm). . . . Thus then this covetous demon (“t’an-mo”) shuts up the pure ether in the city of the bones; he establishes dark thought, and there he plants a tree of death. Then he imprisons the pleasant wind in the city of the nerves; he establishes dark feeling, and there he plants a tree of death. Then he encloses the power of the light in the city of the veins; he establishes dark reflection, and there he plants a tree of death. Then he encloses the excellent water in the city of the flesh; he establishes dark intelligence, and there he plants a tree of death. Then he encloses the noble fire in the city of the skin; he establishes dark reasoning, and there he plants a tree of death. The demon of covetousness plants these five poisonous trees in the five kinds of sunken lands, and there he continually makes them deceive and disturb the primitive luminous nature, draw out the alien nature from it, and put forth poisonous fruits. Thus the tree of dark thought springs up from within the city of the bones, and its fruit is

¹ *Contra Faustum*, vi, 8.

² Cf. the Manichaean writing cited by Severus of Antioch in his one hundred and twenty-third homily (M. A. KUGENER-FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, ii, p. 117, and commentary, pp. 168-70): “The Tree of Death is divided into many (trees)”; SIMPLICIUS, in *Epict. enchirid.*, xxvii, pp. 71, 19, ed. Dübner: “dendra”.

³ THEODORE BAR KŌNAÏ, *Scholies*, xi (in FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme* i, p. 40).

⁴ *Journal Asiatique* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), pp. 528-30.

hatred; the tree of dark feeling springs up from within the city of the nerves, and its fruit is irritability; the tree of dark reflection springs up from within the city of the veins, and its fruit is lust; the tree of dark intelligence springs up from within the city of the flesh, and its fruit is anger; the tree of dark reasoning springs up from within the city of the skin, and its fruit is folly. Thus then, of these five kinds of things: bone, nerves, veins, flesh and skin, he makes a prison and there shuts up the five divided bodies."

And further on, describing the liberating action of the divine Messenger:

"When the Ambassador of the bountiful Light had bestowed the five liberal gifts, he threw down and bore away the five kinds of evil and poisonous trees of death. He began by driving out dark non-luminous thoughts, throwing down and removing its tree of death. The root of this tree is hatred, its trunk is violence, its branches are irritability, its leaves are aversion, its fruits are division, its taste is insipidity, its colour disparagement. Then he drove away dark and non-luminous feeling, throwing down and removing its tree of death. The root of this tree is faithlessness, its trunk forgetfulness, its branches hesitation and negligence, its leaves are violence, its fruits torments, its taste greed and concupiscence, its colour resistance. Next he drove out dark non-luminous reflection, throwing down and removing its tree of death. The root of this tree is concupiscence, its trunk is idleness, its branches violence, its leaves are hatred of superiors, its fruits are ribald jesting, its taste covetousness, its colour sensual love. . . . Next he drove away dark intelligence, throwing down and removing its tree of death. The root of this tree is anger, its trunk is stupidity, its branches are lack of faith, its leaves are unintelligence, its fruit disdain, its taste pride, its colour contempt for others. Then he drove out dark reasoning, throwing down and removing its tree of death, The root of this tree is stupidity, its trunk is absence of memory, its branches are sluggishness of mind, its leaves are contemplating one's own shadow and believing oneself without peer, its fruits are outshining the common ruck of men in gorgeous dress and adornment, its taste is the love of necklets, pearls, rings,



Pl. 6. Head of the Gorgon (archaic). Attic bowl by Nicosthenes, late 6th century B.C. (Louvre.)



Pl. 7. Head of the Gorgon (classical). Terra-cotta, 3rd century B.C. (Photo. Giraudon.)



Pl. 8. Pre-Columbian epoch (Nicaragua): interior decoration of a tripod bowl. In the centre is the god of war; beneath him Death, surrounded by stylised musical instruments, weapons of war, funerary emblems etc. (after David Sequiera).

bracelets, and a body all decked out with jewels, its colour is immoderate desire for all kinds of foods and drinks wherewith to pamper the flesh. The trees we have just described are the trees of death. The demon of covetousness has made haste to plant them in these dark non-luminous caverns."

Thus, in the beginning, the five Trees of Evil arose from the five Elements, themselves the issue of the five Gulfs. The infernal Region is thus split up into five worlds arranged in terraces one above the other, and each inhabited by a seething population of individual beings of different species corresponding to the five classes of animals: Smoke to the bipeds, the ancestors of man; Fire to the quadrupeds; Winds to flying creatures; Water to the fishes; and Darkness in the restricted sense of the term, to reptiles. Let us cite the list as given by St. Augustine:

[Dicere desinant] malum esse animalia in illis singulis nata elementis, serpentina, in tenebris, natantia in aquis, volatilia in ventis, quadrupedia in igne, bipedia in fumo."¹

"In fumo nata animalia bipedia, unde homines ducere originem censent [sc. Manichaei]: in tenebris serpentina, in igne quadrupedia, in aquis natantia, in vento volatilia."²

"Novimus etiam animalia serpentina, natantia, volantia, quadrupedia, bipedia."³

Each of these regions is a kingdom or principality over which presides a king or prince, its own proper Archon. These five chiefs—who share the whole Realm of Darkness between them—may be called collectively the Princes of Darkness.⁴ Each is born of one of the five elements which respectively specify each of their

¹ *De mor. eccl. cathol., et de mor. Manich.*, ii, ix, 14; P. L. 32, 1351.

² *De haer.*, 46; P. L. 42, 35.

³ *Contra Epist. Fundam.* ed. Zycha 31, p. 233, 13-14, and cf. 28, p. 229, 8-16. Demons, birds, quadrupeds and reptiles are mentioned in strophe 20 of the Chinese Hymnary of London (*A.P.A.W.* (1926), iv, p. 101, or in *B.S.O.A.S.*, xi (1943), p. 177); birds, fish, quadrupeds, demons appear in the Parthian hymn of the Turfan fragment T II D 178 (*A.P.A.W.* (1926), iv, p. 113). Simplicius (loc. cit.) speaks in more general terms of "zôa khersaia kai enudra". On the five kinds of animals see the Turfan fragment T III 260, in *S.P.A.W.* (1932), pp. 182-3, and cf. the note to this passage.

⁴ "Tenebrarum principes" (*Acta Archelai*, vii, 4, pp. 10, 23, ed. Beeson) = "oi tou skotous arkhontes" (EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion*, lxvi, 25, 6; t. iii, p. 55, 4, ed. Holl), or simply "principes" (*Act. Arch.*, viii, 1, pp. 11, 18) = "arkhontes" (EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 25, 8; t. iii, p. 56, 10); "principes tenebrarum", in the passage from St. Augustine cited below.

five worlds ("quinque elementa quae genuerunt principes proprios," as we read in St. Augustine), or, more directly, of one of the five Trees of Evil and of Death, which bred them in the manner of worms. St. Augustine makes this clear enough elsewhere (and the trait is more or less apparent in a Manichaean document used by Severus of Antioch):¹

"Nam ipsa prima corpora principum tenebrarum ex arboribus ibidem natis tamquam vermiculos opinantur exorta, ipsas autem arbores ex quinque illis elementis."²

And a little further on:

"Primi principes tenebrarum, quorum parentes arbores fuerunt."³

This vermin spawned another, now numberless. Matter, as a passage in *Kephalaïon* iv⁴ indicates, has thrown up in couples "the whole brood of Archons who dwell in the worlds of Darkness". Each male Archon pairs with a female, "as Fire with Sensuality which possesses men and women, drawing each to the other." Thus coupling with their comrades the Princes engendered the two-sexed animals, their respective subjects; and these, coupling in their turn, propagate their own species indefinitely. We may therefore set out the hierarchy of the Princes of Darkness in the following way:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The King of bipeds | =The Archon of the world of Smoke. |
| 2. The King of quadrupeds | =The Archon of the world of Fire. |
| 3. The King of flying things | =The Archon of the world of Air. |
| 4. The King of fishes | =The Archon of the world of Water. |
| 5. The King of reptiles | =The Archon of the world of Darkness. |

Such is the order followed in *Kephalaïon* vi. And thanks to the correspondences indicated we can see why the author of this

¹ Cf. M. A. KUGENER-FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, ii, p. 169.

² *Contra Faustum*, vi, 8.

³ *Contra Faustum*, vi, 8.

⁴ *Keph.*, iv (Stuttgart 1935), t. I, p. 26, 11-17.

text attributed the figure of a particular animal to each of the Princes enumerated and described. This animal indeed is missing in the case of the King of Smoke, where we should normally expect to find the figure of a biped or demon, for the passage has undoubtedly been interpolated or tampered with. Here the portrait of a personage of an apparently distinct and composite nature—the “King of Darkness”, a name that should not lead us to confuse him with the fifth Archon on our list—has been substituted. But as for the other four Princes, it is easy to see why the King of Fire, chief of the quadrupeds, has been given the figure of a lion; the King of the Air, chief of the birds, that of an eagle; the King of Water, chief of swimming things, that of a fish; and the King of Darkness, chief of the reptiles, that of a serpent or dragon.¹ The description is furthermore enriched with new traits and filled out with still further correlations. To each of the Archons there corresponds a metal, of which his body is made. For the Archon of the world of Smoke, it is gold; for the Archon of the world of Fire, it is bronze; for the Archon of the world of wind, it is iron; for the Archon of the world of water, it is silver; and for the Archon of the world of Darkness, lead and tin. Five tastes are also attached to them: salt to the first, sour to the second; acrid to the third, sweet (apparently insipid) to the fourth, and bitter to the last. Finally, each of them answers to the principle of one of the five current errors, which are: star worship or astrological mysticism; belief in the universal and tyrannical power of the planets (the sun and moon being excluded from their number by Manichaeism), or, more vaguely, of the principalities of the visible heavens, an attitude or opinion inspired by the King of Smoke or, to follow our text exactly, by the King of the Empire of Darkness as a whole;² fire-worship (Mazdeism), of which the King of Fire is very naturally made the instigator; idolatry, which derives from

¹ Figures of animals (lion, eagle and dragon, among others) are attributed also by the Gnostics to the evil powers, more particularly to the seven planetary Archons (ORIGEN, *Con. Cels.*, vi, 30; *Apokryphon Johannis*, trans. C. SCHMIDT, in *Philotesia* (Berlin, 1907), p. 332, or, in the text recently discovered at Nag Hammadi, fols. 17-18; Theodore bar Kōnai, Scholies xi, notice of the “Ophites”, trans. H. POGNON, in *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khouabir*, pp. 213-14).

² The meaning of the passage (*Kephala*, vi, p. 33, 5-8) is far from certain. At first sight, “the principalities and powers of the earth and of the whole world”, of which there is question here, would seem to be, like “the principalities and powers and the kings of the world” mentioned further on (p. 33, 15-16) temporal sovereigns, chiefs of state and governors of provinces, so that the “tyranny” here envisaged would be political despotism. All authority, all civil power, is thus referred to a

the King of Air; baptism (i.e. Mandism or some kindred sect, perhaps also Christianity), the religion of water, and so referred to the King of Water; divination and other oracular practices, over which the King of Darkness presides.

These five kingdoms, however, go to make up only one; they are in fact but subdivisions of one sole kingdom, the Kingdom of Darkness opposed to the Kingdom of Light, the whole being ruled by a single chief, a single monarch, who reigns over all, just as God, or the Father of Majesty, reigns over the five "Abodes" and the whole of the world of light. And here there rises into view the monstrous and colossal figure of the Supreme Archon, the Archon *par excellence*, the Manichæan devil; and, along with him, all those multifarious difficulties that weigh so heavily on any study of this personage.

Just as his adversary, the Ruler of the Realm of Light, is called the "King of Light" or of "Lights", so the sovereign of the Realm of Darkness is invested, in symmetrical contrast, with the title of "King" or "Prince of Darkness" (Syr., "melēkh hēšukhā"; Lat., "princeps tenebrarum"; Copt., "arkhōn empkēkē" or "erro empkēkē", or more especially "erro ennapkēkē", this last formula standing literally for "king of those who belong (or 'of what belongs') to the darkness".¹ This title, to start with, leads to a double confusion. Each of the five Archons of the five Dark Realms can claim it, and in fact, as we have seen, certain documents qualify them collectively as "Princes of Darkness". Moreover, and above all, the name of "King" or "Prince of the world of Darkness" ("erro empkosmos empkēkē") is also given in

diabolical origin, and Manichæism here anticipated the view of the Bogomils (cf. H. CH. PUECH and A. VAILLANT (*Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre* (Paris, 1945), pp. 274-7). Such an interpretation is not to be excluded. But I hesitate to adopt it and rather believe, given the tenor of the parallel developments that follow, that here we have the astral "tyranny", and the domination of this lower world and of the whole material universe by the "principalities" and the "powers" that inhabit the visible heavens, agents and ministers of Fate.

¹ On this Syriac title see FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, p. 11 and n. 1; on the second Coptic title see *Kephalaia*, iv, p. 26, 19, and the note on this line. "Princeps tenebrarum" in the Latin translation of the *Acta Archelai* (xii, 4, p. 20, 14, ed. Beeson) = "o arkhōn tou skotous", EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 30, 2, t. iii, p. 69, 5, ed. Holl and in ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faust.*, xxi, 14. There are other names, too, such as "Chief of Wickedness", "o tēs kakias arkhōn" (TITUS OF BOSTRA, *adv. Manich.*, i, 33; P. G. 18, 1120 C), and "Grand Archōn", "princeps magnus, o Arkhōn o megas" (*Act. Arch.*, ix, 3, p. 14, 21 = EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 27, 3, t. iii, p. 62, 2) or "King of Demons", "dēvān Sāh" (S 13, in *N.N.G.W.* (1933), p. 216).

the *Kephalaion* to the fifth Archon; and thus the same name is unfortunately common to two personages who remain nevertheless distinct—to the particular chief of the lowest of the five infernal zones, and also to his suzerain, the supreme master of the whole territory comprising his own “world” or “kingdom” and those of his colleagues.

But the ambiguity does not arise solely from an awkward terminology; it is inherent in the very nature of the Manichaean arch-demon. For where are we to place him? Shall we put him above the diabolical hierarchy over which he presides, or within the hierarchy itself as one of its members holding there the highest place, the proper lord of the highest of the five kingdoms, and owing his supremacy over the four others to the superiority of his seat? In other words, must we—as we should have to do on the first hypothesis—distinguish him from the five Archons, and from the Archon of Smoke no less than from those of Fire, Air, Water and of Darkness properly so-called; or, on the contrary—if the second supposition be correct—must we identify him with the King of the World of Smoke and of bipeds? The question is not to be settled without hesitation.

Certain texts—*Kephalaion* xxvii to start with, and the parallel part of *Kephalaion* vi—seem to favour the first solution. The Prince of Darkness is there described as uniting in himself the five characteristic forms of the five species that people the five infernal worlds; and so also of their five chiefs, including the Chief of the world of Smoke. He has the feet and hands of the demons, “in the likeness of the sons of the world of Smoke”; he has a lion-like shape like the King of Fire, ruler of quadrupeds; he has an eagle’s wings after the fashion of the Chief of flying things, the King of the Air; he has the tail of a fish like the King of Water who reigns over the aquatic animals; and he has a serpent’s or dragon’s belly like that of his namesake the King of Darkness, father and master of reptiles.¹ He goes erect on his two legs like the bipeds, or on four paws, like the quadrupeds; he flies like the birds, swims and dives like the fishes, and crawls like the serpents.

¹ Cf. the Coptic *Psalter* of Fayoum, *Ps.* ccxlviii, t. ii, p. 57, 18: “this dragon with the lion’s face and his mother Matter”. In Gnosticism, the first Archon, the chief of the planetary Archons, Ialdabaoth (assimilated to Kronos-Saturn and to the God of the Jews) is also represented with the figure of a lion (ORIGEN, *c. Cels.*, vi, 31) or under the combined forms of serpent and lion (*Apokryphon Iohannis*, trans. SCHMIDT, in *Philotesia*, p. 330, or in the new papyrus of Nag Hammadi, fol. 15).

The neo-Platonic philosopher Simplicius, who calls him the "Pentamorph", expressly mentions three of his forms, adding that he has forgotten the others: the forms namely of lion, fish and eagle.¹ And what is more, this composite monster is sometimes described as the collective product of the Land of Darkness, as having issued from the five elements (including smoke) of the five kingdoms. "Then," says Ibn al-Murtadā,² "the Darkness imagined and thereupon fashioned from all its parts a horrible form." And at greater length, Ibn an-Nadīm, following an original text:³

"Mani teaches: From the dark earth came Satan. Not that he was in himself eternal from the beginning, but the substances that went to his making were eternal (infinite). These substances, the issue of their elements, then united and gave birth to the form of Satan. His head was like the head of a lion, his body like that of a serpent, his wings like those of a bird, his tail like that of a great fish, and his four feet like those of creeping animals."⁴

The impression left by all this is that since he is a synthesis of all the powers of the infernal world, and hence the general overlord of the five Realms of Darkness that gave him birth, gathering them up under his own sole power and moving through them at his ease, the Prince of Darkness differs from each of the Archons, his vassals, who, for their part, own their birth not to an amalgam of the five elements but each to one of them alone; that one, namely, which is proper to each of their particular and limited domains. He is neither a peculiar issue of the world of Smoke, nor yet confined to that world as regards residence or exercise of sovereignty. That amounts to saying that he seems to be other than the King of Smoke, indeed his hierarchical superior, and that, too, by the same title that makes him—beyond all shadow of doubt—

¹ In *Epict. enchirid.*, xxvii, p. 71, 20, and p. 72, 16-19, ed. Dübner.

² *Al-bahr az-zahhār*, trans. KESSLER, in *Mani*, p. 352.

³ *Fihrist*, trans. FLÜGEL, in *Mani*, p. 86, or trans. KESSLER, op. cit., pp. 387-8.

⁴ The text reads "dauābb" ("creeping animals", "reptiles"), although elsewhere it speaks of "demons". According to W. Henning, a remark developed by H. J. POLOTSKY (*Abriss*, col. 250, 21-30), the error arose from a mistake of the Arabian translator, who, in the Iranian source that he had before him, confused "dev", ("demon") and "devagh" ("worm"). This explanation is not admitted by S. WIKANDER, *Vayu*, i (Lund, 1941), p. 202, nor by G. WIDENGREN, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism* (Upsala-Leipzig, 1946), p. 31, n. 2.

the distinct suzerain of the Kings of Fire, Air, Water, and Darkness.

Other documents, however, and of no bad standing (one of them seems to be an extract from the writings of Mani himself) run counter to this interpretation, and strongly support the second of the two hypotheses envisaged above. They clearly assert the identity of the Prince of Darkness with the King of bipeds or of the world of Smoke. Thus a passage cited by St. Augustine from the Fundamental Epistle:¹

“Pari more introrsum gens caliginis ac fumi plena, in qua morabatur immanis princeps omnium et dux habens circa se innumerabiles principes, quorum omnium ipse erat mens et origo.”

or this text of St. Augustine's:²

“Huc accedit, quia illi principi [tenebrarum] non tantum sui generis, id est bipedes, quos parentes hominum dicitis, sed etiam cuncta animalium ceterorum genera subdita erant et ad nutum eius convertebantur faciendo, quod jussisset, credendo, quod suasisset.”

The testimony of various Arab authors³ points in the same direction, although less directly. They agree in taking opaque Smoke as at once the fifth of the elements of which, according to the Manichaeans, the Darkness is composed, and also the ruling element of the four others, their “spirit” (cf. “mens” in the Fundamental Epistle) called “al-Humāma” by the sect. Moreover, it is further specified here and there that it was the Archon of Smoke or the King of bipeds, the instigator and principle of all wars, who took the initiative in the attack on the Realm of Light, and led the troops of the five infernal races to the assault.⁴ He it is then, undoubtedly, who should be recognised in other

¹ ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Epist. Fundam.*, 15.

² ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faustum*, xxi, 4.

³ IBN AN-NADIM, in FLÜGEL, *Mani*, p. 90 (and cf. p. 186, n. 77 and p. 240, n. 140); SHAHRAS'TANI, *Religionspartheien*, i, pp. 286 and 288, trans. HAARBRUECKER (with the corrections indicated by FLÜGEL, op. cit., p. 240); IBN AL-MURTADĀ, in KESSLER, *Mani*, p. 351. In the same way, in the luminous world, the “sweet breeze” (or the air) is the “spirit” of the four other elements; wind, light, water and fire.

⁴ *Kephala*, vi, p. 30, 25-33.

versions of the myth under the names of "King of Darkness"¹ or of "Šimnu",² and who, after his victory, swallowed up the five luminous elements of the soul or of the armour of his adversary, the Primal Man or Khōrmuzta (Ormuzd), and mixed them with "the five sons of Darkness", or with the five dark elements composing his body. The sum of it all is that the Prince of Darkness appears to be one and the same personage as the first of the five Archons, and to have a two-fold suzerainty: he is chief on his own account of the superior Kingdom of Smoke, and thereby master of the highest of the daemonic species; and he is, at the same time, the Monarch—or to say the truth, the tyrant—of the whole totality of the five zones of Darkness.

None the less, a certain vagueness remains. As the global expression of the universe of Evil, and above all as the sole King of the hells symmetrically opposed to the equally unique King of the Paradise of Light, the Prince of Darkness seems to figure as an autonomous personage, distinct from and transcending the elements he rules. But since, on the other hand, he is composed of these same elements, he seems, in a way, to be included and immanent in them. He is doubtless the highest part of the whole, but a part, nevertheless, just as the head is part of the body, or as the animating and ruling faculty is part of the organic whole of the vital or psychological functions. Nor is it otherwise with God in the mythology of the sect. The Father of Majesty is at once distinct from the Luminous Earth and from its five members, and yet merged with the totality of this earth and the union of these members, which severally define the various aspects of his spiritual activity.³ The situation of the two antagonists thus oscillates between two positions: the one transcendent in a sense, or virtually so, to the totality of the worlds they respectively command, of which worlds, in another sense, they are the emanation and synthesis, englobing and yet englobed by them; and the other within these worlds whose upper zones they occupy in a more special way, and whose "spirit" they constitute. In the first case the Prince of Darkness is distinct, or all but distinct, from the

¹ *Kephala*, xvii, p. 55, 27; xviii, p. 58, 8; Theodore bar Kōnāi, in CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, pp. 13 and 18.

² *Khuastuanist*, i B, ed. and trans. W. BANG, in *Le Muséon*, xxxvi, 1923, p. 145.

³ Thus, while in Theodore bar Kōnāi, the Father of Greatness is "outside" of his five "abodes", the Fihrist makes these latter his "members", or his parts, which he wholly occupies. On the contradiction, which St. Augustine already felt (*Con. Felicem*, i, 18), cf. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, pp. 8-9.

King of bipeds, just as he is distinct from the other Archons; in the second case, on the contrary, he is identical.

Now it is just this uncertainty, which so embarrasses our explanations, that is reflected in the above-mentioned anomaly in the composition of *Kephalaion* vi. The compiler wanted to fill out the text of this Chapter by availing himself of the independent and more developed description of the King of Darkness which he found in *Kephalaion* xxvii or some closely allied document. But the place where he put his addition and his way of carrying out his design bears witness to his own uncertainty. He did not go so far as to introduce the borrowed portrait before that of the King of Smoke, but, while dovetailing it into the section reserved for this King, he did not venture to fuse the two texts wholly together and to make up one picture out of two; far from attenuating or effacing the heterogeneous character of the two pieces, he emphasised it rather, rounding off his plagiarism with a formula that here becomes equivocal: "As the King of Darkness, etc." He thus appears to have equally scrupled to confuse the Prince of Darkness with the King of Smoke as to distinguish them clearly. He inclines, no doubt, to identify them, but, not being able to bring himself to do it, he falls back on a solution that betrays his own embarrassment and leaves his reader in like perplexity. Here, then, is something more than a mere awkwardness in composition, or rather, to put it more precisely, this very awkwardness is the sign and effect of a real difficulty inherent in the whole Manichaean conception of the Prince of Darkness.

To this ambiguity another has now to be added, which—unless perhaps we take it for the root of the first—simply reduplicates and repeats it on another plane. It concerns the relations of our personage with Matter.¹

Sometimes the Prince of Darkness is taken for the product of this darkness, or—what amounts to the same thing—of Obscurity. He is engendered by Obscurity, by "Night, the mother of the Archons",² and it is this mother Night who moves him to throw

¹ Cf. H. J. POLOTSKY, *Abriss*, col. 250, 37-42.

² Cf. *Kephalaion*, iv, p. 27, 5-6, or Turfan fragments S 9 and S 13 ("Āz, the evil mother of all the demons"), in *N.G.G.W.* (1932), p. 215. *Kephalaia* vi and xxvii themselves expressly say that it was matter that formed the body of the Prince of Darkness. Psalm ccxlviii of the *Hymnary* of Fayoum (t. ii, p. 57, 18) is still more formal. It mentions, as we have seen above, "the lion-faced Dragon and his mother Matter". According to Shahrastānī (*Religionspartheien*, i, pp. 287-8), Obscurity

all his resources into the war against the eons of Majesty.¹ He is in some sort her son, somewhat as in Mandeism the giant Ur, himself also a King of Darkness, is the son of Rūhā, the monstrous she-devil who presides over the "Black Waters". Sometimes, on the contrary, he appears as the equivalent of Matter itself, or as its personification, who, under the appellation of devil, takes the place of Matter, and is set over against God as absolute Principle.² So it is in the various versions of the cosmological myth in which the assailant of the world of Light and the adversary of the Primal Man is identified, now, as we have seen, with the Prince of Darkness, and now with Matter,³ and in which, in the course of a later episode, now one and now the other is credited with the creation of the first human couple.⁴ Hence the clash of testimonies, some affirming the ungenerated and eternal character of the demon,⁵ and others expressly denying that Satan has existed "in propria persona" from all time, and granting an infinity to the elements whence he arose.⁶ For the former, he is a synonym for Matter, and for the latter a distinct hypostasis, emanated by Obscurity.

Hence also the still more marked vacillation that appeared when the Manichaeans adapted the original system of their master to the religions of other peoples. In order to spread abroad gave birth, without copulation, to the Archdemon. She produced him and the other demons as a rotting carcass produces grubs or worms.

¹ *Kephala*, iv, p. 26, 18-20.

² Cf., for example, TITUS OF BOSTRA, *adv. Manich.*, i, 33; P. G. 18, 1120D/1121A (=SERAPION OF THMUIS, *adv. Manich.*, 26, 6-14, ed. Casey); EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 8, 5, t. iii, p. 29, ed. Holl; FAUSTUS OF MILEVE, in ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faust.*, xxi, 1; *Khuastuaništ*, i C, p. 145, ed. and trans. BANG.

³ For example in Alexander of Lycopolis, Titus of Bostra, Theodoret, etc.

⁴ The traditions, to say the truth, are remarkably tangled (chief texts in FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, pp. 42-4, 73-4). Some connect the myth of the creation of man with matter (e.g. *Acta Archelai*, or the Turfan fragment S 9, in *N.G.G.W.* (1932), pp. 214-24, where Adam is put down to the work of Āz). Others (ST. AUGUSTINE, *De natura boni*, 46) make out the Prince of Darkness to be the father and former of humanity; while still others (THEODORET, *Huer. fab. comp.*, i, 26) attribute this role to Saclas, "the Archon of matter". But elsewhere Saclas-Ashaqloun is called "the son of the King of Darkness" (Theodore bar Kōnāi) or taken as one of the Archons of Smoke (ST. AUGUSTINE, *De haer.*, 46). IBN AN-NADĪM (pp. 90-1, FLÜGEL's translation) speaks more vaguely of "one of the Archons" or of "the Archon" of Desire or Covetousness ("al-hirs" = "Āz") and of Concupiscence ("aš-šahwat" = "Avarzōg").

⁵ TITUS OF BOSTRA, *adv. Manich.*, i, 33; P. G. 18, 1120D/1121A = SERAPION OF THMUIS, *adv. Manich.*, 26, 6-14, p. 41, ed. Casey. Less directly, EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 8, 5, t. iii, p. 29, 4-8, ed. Holl, and *Acta Archelai*, vii, 1, p. 9, 18-23, ed. Beeson (=EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 25, 3, t. iii, p. 53, 20-p. 54, 4).

⁶ IBN AN-NADĪM, *Fihrist*, p. 86, trans. FLÜGEL.

the revelation of the Paraclete they set themselves to transpose its more or less abstract and neuter terms into various mythological or doctrinal keys. Thus, as they fondly thought, it might lend itself the better to translation into every other tongue, and might facilitate the universal diffusion, in varied guises, of the oecumenical message of Mani.

In the main, whether immediately in himself or under the guise of Matter, and in so far as he could be tantamount to this, the Prince of Darkness was identified: in the Christian East and, as St. Augustine suggests, in the most popular presentations of the system, with the devil;¹ in the Moslem world with Satan or with the Primordial Demon (Iblis al Quadīm);² in the Mazdean East with Ahriman;³ in China, with "t'an-mo", the "demon of covetousness";⁴ and among the Uigurs of Central Asia with Šimnu or Šamnu.⁵ The Iranian and old-Turkish documents, however, equally personify Matter as Āz, a feminine and diabolical incarnation of Concupiscence (the Āz or Āzi of Mazdeism, an insatiable and here masculine demon of greed, who devours everything he can lay hold of, and when nothing is left devours himself),⁶ and they often reduplicate this personage into two demons, male and female, who form a couple: Desire (Covetousness) and Concupiscence.⁷ Sometimes also Āz is distinguished from Ahriman, and "t'an-mo" may correspond now to one and now to the other. Finally, if Šimnu (Ahriman) appears here and there as primitive demon and thus superior to the "demon of

¹ Satanas, or the devil, in the passages from Serapion of Thmuis, Titus of Bostra, and Epiphanius mentioned above in the last note but one; the demon in the "capitulum" of Faustus of Mileve given by St. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faust.*, xx, 1: "est quidem, quod duo principia confitemur, sed unum ex his deum vocamus, alterum hylen, aut, ut communiter et usitate dixerim, daemonem." The declaration of the Manichaean Fortunatus in St. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Fortunat. disput.*, 3, is more indirect: "nec tenebras nec daemones, nec satanam." For the rest the name of Satan is not absent from the Turfan texts (e.g. M 42 and M 104, in *S.P.A.W.* (1934), pp. 307 and 882-3).

² For example, IBN AN-NADĪM, *Fihrist*, pp. 86-8, trans. Flügel.

³ For example, the Turfan fragments brought together by A. V. W. JACKSON, *Researches in Manichaeism*, p. 149; and add t. iii, 260 (*S.P.A.W.* (1932), pp. 172 and 184-7; cf. p. 219) and M 49 (*S.P.A.W.* (1933), p. 307); *Šikand Gumādik Vitehār*, xvi, pp. 8-52 and 252-5, ed. and trans. DE MENASCE.

⁴ The Chavannes-Pelliot treatise (*Journal Asiatique* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), p. 523; pp. 528-9 and 533: "the demon of hate, the master of covetousness", "yuan-mo t'an-tchou"; p. 537).

⁵ For example, *Khuastuaništ*, i B and C, pp. 145 and 147 ed. and trans. BANG (cf. *Commentary*, p. 171); t.Ia, in *A.P.A.W.* (1911), vi, pp. 19-20 (cf. *S.P.A.W.* (1909), p. 1056).

⁶ Cf. V. HENRY, *Le Parsisme* (Paris, 1905), p. 74.

⁷ Cf. A. V. W. JACKSON, *Researches in Manichaeism*, pp. 106-8 and 251, n. 134.

covetousness", to the "soq yäk" of the Uïgur texts, it may be that where he is opposed to the Primal Man (Öhrmizd, Ormuzd or Khōrmuzta) he represents only a special entity emanated by Matter, and, in a sense, subordinated to Matter; just as his adversary is subordinated to the Mother of the Living, or to Zurvān, the Father of Greatness.¹

All these correspondences, which I have simplified and abridged, are sufficiently confused and inadequate. Doubtless it could hardly be otherwise considering the heterogeneous character of the vocabularies and religious systems into which the Manichæan missionaries had to transpose the fundamental dogmas of the sect. There were difficulties enough in that; but they were aggravated to the point of becoming insurmountable by the ambiguity surrounding the figure of the Prince of Darkness even in the original presentation of the authentic doctrine. Once more: is he a personification of Matter, or is he its product? Is he identical with it, or is he distinct? Both, it would seem. One sole and same reality is called Matter on the conceptual plane, and the Prince of Darkness on the mythical plane; and this personage is nothing but a translation into myth of what is called Matter in abstract speculation. But then, if we decide to stand squarely on the plane of myth, we soon perceive that Matter in its turn becomes another mythical entity, that is to say an incarnation of Evil, Night, or Desire, a kind of grand she-demon whose personality then tends to become distinct—and does in fact become distinct—from that of the Prince of Darkness, who is now generally imagined as her son, and doubtless also as her lover. And so, even when explained in a way by the coexistence in Manichæism of two different planes of expression, the contradiction presented by our equally affirmative replies to the opposing questions put above remains nevertheless untouched. The incoherence into which we fall when we pass from one plane to the other, adds force to the initial uncertainty, and leaves it finally irreducible.

Whether he be identical with Matter (and hence the uncreated equal of God) or whether he be conceived as generated by Matter, the Prince of Darkness—let us say simply the devil—attains in Manichæism to the highest position to which a dualism

¹ Cf. the remarks of Chavannes and Pelliot in *J. A.* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), p. 523, n. 3.

of the Gnostic type can advance him. Short of pretending to be the sole God of the visible and invisible universe, to what higher exaltation could he aspire?

He is not in the least, as in the mitigated dualism of most other Gnostic systems, a ruined and degraded hypostasis, or the fruit of some being fallen from a higher world, one of the angels of the lower and creative god, the son or brother of the Demiurge, himself the son of Sophia exiled from the Pleroma, or again—like the Satanaël of the Bogomils—the eldest son of God himself and the brother of Christ.¹ The Manichaean dualism is radical. It refuses, whether directly or indirectly or in any way whatever, to derive the Evil One from any transcendent region or from any good substance. It expressly rejects the Zervanite conception, which would make Ahriman the twin-brother of Ōhrmazd, and draw the double birth from the womb of a supreme divinity, anterior alike to Good or Evil, “Zurvān akanārāgh,” “Illimitable Time”.² In the ordinary gnosis, on the other hand, it is to his relation—positive or negative—to the creation and to the God responsible for the creation, that the devil owes his elevation to ever more and more considerable rank and power. Being but one of the creative angels to start with, or one of the seven angels of the Demiurge,³ or again, according to other schools, a product of the Demiurge or emanated simultaneously with the Demiurge,⁴ he grows in the shadow of and at the expense of this entity, till little by little he takes his place, and—now “the god of this world” in the full sense of the term—he is finally assimilated to the Creator and ruler of this present visible universe, that is to say, in a Christian atmosphere, to the God of Genesis and of the Law, to the God of the Old Testament, bad, or at all events ruthless in anger and strict in justice, and so opposed to the God of the Gospel, higher, merciful, unknown by and a “stranger” to this lower world.⁵ Elsewhere, on the contrary, it is to his antagonism to the Demiurge that the devil owes his exaltation. Identified with

¹ Cf. H. C. PUECH and A. VAILLANT, *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre* (Paris, 1945), pp. 181–98.

² Turfan fragment M 28 (*A.P.A.W.* (1904), ix, p. 94); *Khuastuanift*, i C, p. 147, ed. and trans. BANG.

³ For example, IRENAEUS, *adv. haer.*, i, 25, 4 (Carpocratians).

⁴ IRENAEUS, *adv. haer.*, i, 11, 1 (Valentinus) and i, 5, 4 (Ptolomaeus); cf. Hippolytus, *Elenchos*, vi, 32–4.

⁵ Letter of Ptolemy to Flora, in EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, xxxiii, 7, 1–7 (anonymous sect). It may be that the Marcionites had identified the creator with the devil (cf. A. HILGENFELD, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (Leipzig, 1884), p. 527, n. 867,

the serpent of Eden, has he not thwarted the plans of Yahwe, revealed to Adam the "gnosis" of Good and Evil, the knowledge of the transcendent Father, and has he not taught mankind to spurn the prohibitions of the creator and revolt against his illusory and tyrannical domination?¹

There is practically nothing of all this in the original Manichaean conception of Satan. Doubtless in the Western formulations of the system the devil tended to assume the aspect and to play the part of the God of the Jews;² and possibly also he had already borrowed some of his characteristics from this source even in Mani's own picture of him—if, that is, on this point as on so many others, the heresiarch had felt the influence of Marcionism. But here his relation to the creation, even the very idea of creation, enter only secondarily. The Prince of Darkness is a pre-cosmic being. The distinction and antithesis of Good and Evil are anterior to the appearance of the world, which is but a later consequence of their essential and eternal rivalry. Can we really speak of "creation" at all in Manichaeism? The universe, in this doctrine, is constituted by a fortuitous mixture of the two natures, resulting from the absorption by Obscurity of a part of the divine substance. This transitory world, even time itself, come of the chance encounter of two Intemporals; they are the fruit or the expression of an abnormal and violent amalgamation of two Ingenerates, an episodic aspect of their coexistence and their struggle. The Prince of Darkness is not the Artisan of this "mixture" ("gumēčišn", "mixis" or "krāsis", "commixtio"); he is but one of its two components; at the most he has provoked it by setting out to conquer the Realm of Light and by engulfing and absorbing into himself the "pars dei", the Primal Man sent to repulse him. If moreover we take "creation" not for the mixture in itself, but for the organisation of this mixture following

and A. HARNACK, *Marcion* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 98). Such, at any rate, was the case with the Paulicians, the Bogomils and the mediaeval Catharists.

¹ IRENAEUS, *adv. haer.*, i, 24, 2 (Saturnilos) and i, 30, 7-8 (further on the serpent and his six sons, the "cosmic demons", appear, moreover, as adversaries of the human race. Is that the doctrine of the Sethians?). The exaltation of the serpent was characteristic, above all, of the Ophites or kindred sects (cf. notice 37 of the *Panarion* of Epiphanius and the sources indicated by K. Holl in his edition). But in spite of the heresiologists, it is not said that the serpent was the devil in the eyes of gnostics of this sort: he appears, on the contrary, to be assimilated to Christ.

² Cf. *Acta Archelai*, v, p. 7, 20-2, Beeson, and, more generally, the argumentation attributed to Mani in *Acta*, xv (xiii) or Faustus's criticism of the Old Testament reproduced in the *Contra Faustum* of ST. AUGUSTINE.

on the initial defeat of God, then the chief thing in this "demiurgy" is the work, not of Evil, but of the Father of Majesty, and of the good powers he emanates for the purpose, notably the Living Spirit, called "Demiurgos"¹ in a Greek account. On this point Mani remains faithful to one of the fundamental inspirations of Mazdeism, which attributes creation to the good, wise and all-knowing God, sees in it the counterstroke of Ohrmazd to the enterprises of Ahriman and his auxiliaries, and the effect of a good will which finds in Creation a means to ward off the jealous attacks of the Evil One, to foil the attempts of the destructive powers, to limit and forestall the harm that comes, or might come, of them, and finally to extend an effective protection to creatures.² To bring about an initial differentiation between the imprisoned Light and the imprisoning Darkness, to turn the Macrocosm into a mechanism for saving souls, to fit its parts together, put them in motion and assure their functioning—all this is due to the agency of the Good and is effected at the expense of Evil, which contributes nothing but the passive matter. In the admirable phrase of Evodius:³ "It was the good nature that made the world, and it was of the bad that it was made" ("Manichaeus enim duas dicit esse naturas, unam bonam et alteram malam: bonam quae fecit mundum, malam de qua factus est mundus"). The Dark Powers have no initiative in all this save merely as "formative of bodies",⁴ in particular when they incite two of the chief Archons to devour the substance of some other demons so as to concentrate it in themselves, and then to couple and engender the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. If we add that according to a legend, which is not, however, specifically Manichaean,⁵ Satan, uniting with Eve, produced Cain and his sister, the truly creative role of Evil or Wickedness is still, take it all in all, sufficiently attenuated. In any case, since we have here to do with an absolute and no

¹ ALEXANDER OF LYCOPOLIS, *Con. Manich. opin.*, 3, pp. 6, 8, ed. Brinkmann. Cf. FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, p. 21 and n. 6.

² Cf. *Šhkand Gumānik Vitehār*, iv, 73-80, p. 57, trans. DE MENASCE, vii, 14-25, p. 87 and especially viii, 50-3, p. 95.

³ *De fide*, 49, p. 974, 22-4, ed. Zycha.

⁴ A common formula in the documents used by St. Augustine and one now found in the Coptic texts from the Fayoum (cf. H. J. POLOTSKY, *Abriss*, col. 250, 38-40).

⁵ *Fihrist*, pp. 91-2, trans. FLÜGEL. On the similar Gnostic and Bogomil myths, also on certain Jewish legends of like tenor, see the indications I have given in various studies: *Mélanges Franz Cumont* (Brussels, 1936), p. 954, n. 1; the art. "Audianer" of the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentums*, i, col. 640; *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre*, pp. 201 and 339, n. 2.

merely relative dualism as in the other Gnostic systems, it is less to his connection with the Demiurge than to his nature as Principle (in the absolute sense of the term), or to his kinship with Matter (taken as irreducible Principle), that the Manichaean devil owes his high promotion. Or, if you will, this promotion is essentially and immediately assured him by his relation to or assimilation with a Principle, whereas his functions as creator and ruler of bodies, as master of the material part of the "mixture" constituting our present universe, are attributed to him only afterwards, and as a consequence of this relation or assimilation which everywhere and always remain fundamental.

Equal in a way to God, or not far from it, the Prince of Darkness nevertheless does not appear to have been advanced to the rank of a god. To qualify the radical dualism of the Manichaeans as a ditheism¹ would doubtless not be wholly incorrect, since Evil, too, is now invested with the essential property of God, which is to be uncreated, and with an omnipotence theoretically equivalent to that of Good; and since in this sense the heresiologists did not hesitate to oppose the two natures under the form and name of two Gods.² The sect itself, however, seems to have shrunk from bestowing such a title on the Evil One. One at least of its African doctors, Faustus of Mileve, expressly rejected it, reserving the name of God exclusively for what is good and beneficent;³ and the *Khuastuanift*, an Uigur confessional formula, counts it as sin to take the demons and the "spirits"⁴ for gods. Precisely because he remains the Evil One, or the major hypostasis of Evil, the devil cannot be "divinised". We may go so far as to say that the more his malefic powers are enhanced, the huger their proportions become, so much the wider becomes the gap that divides and removes him from the sphere of the divine. In any event, there is no sort of tendency to "satanism" in the Church of Light and Truth and Justice, in spite of some accusations—sparse for the rest, banal, and purely traditional—brought against it by various adversaries here and there. To offer sacrifice to the demons, to

¹ The term "ditheism" is used by FR. CUMONT (*Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, p. 7) and criticised by W. BANG (*Le Muséon*, xxxvi (1923), p. 204). See the very just remarks on the discussion by H. J. POLOTSKY, *Abriss*, col. 250, 48–68.

² For example, *Acta Archelai*, vii, 1, p. 9, 18–23, ed. Beeson=EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 25, 3, t. iii, p. 53, 20–p. 54, 4, ed. Holl, and EPIPHANIUS, *Pan.*, lxvi, 8, 5, t. iii, p. 29, 4–8.

³ ST. AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faust.*, xxi, 1.

⁴ vii B, p. 155, ed. and trans. BANG.

give the devil the honour due to God, were reckoned as grave sins in the Manichaean penitentiaries.¹

Hence it appears that if God and the devil counterbalance each other in mass and weight so to speak, the Dark Powers and their King are none the less inferior in quality to their antagonists. This inferiority comes of their intrinsic nature, which is to be evil—indeed they are essential Evil itself. It is not due solely to the fact that Good and Light are immediately and illimitably superior in worth to Evil and to Darkness; it derives also from all that Evil is and represents. It is ugliness for example, and stench, and horror, and abjection; and it cannot be conceived without ideas and sensations of this kind arising in the mind. Thus it is in the *Kephalaia*; and thus, too, in the following decisive text extracted from a Manichaean source by Severus of Antioch:²

“The difference between the two Principles is as great [as that] between a king and a pig. One of them [Good] dwells in his own abodes as in a royal palace; the other [Evil] lives like a pig, wallowing in the mud, feeding greedily on rottenness, or hides like a snake in his den.”

Above all, while God is intelligent, while Light is intelligence, Matter, on the other hand, is stupid.³ Stupid with all the stupidity of the brute; stupid as perpetual movement, movement for movement's sake, movement which has neither beginning, nor end, nor aim, which rolls on, exhausts and renews itself all to no purpose; stupid as violent and blind desire, seeking nothing but its own momentary satisfaction and battenning indefinitely on itself, condemned to an endless round of satisfaction, extinction and rebirth. That is precisely what Matter is, at bottom, for the Manichaean: disorderly agitation and pure appetite, “libido”, the latter being simply a translation on the psychological plane of

¹ *Khuastuanift*, vii B, p. 155 and p. 157, ed. and trans. BANG.

² SEVERUS, *Homily*, cxxiii, in M. A. KUGENER and FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, ii, p. 97.

³ Fragment Pelliot, in *J.A.* (Jan.-Feb. 1913), p. 115: “the nature of Light is wisdom, the nature of Obscurity is folly”; and cf. *Traité Chavannes-Pelliot*, *J.A.* (Nov.-Dec. 1911), pp. 529, 537, 540, 556 (“the folly that properly belongs to the demon of covetousness”), 561, 567.

all that the former is on the physical;¹ a brutal and gratuitous energy in both cases, and steeped, in the second, in the night of unconsciousness whence it emerges only to plunge back.

As the mother is so is the son, and the subjects of this son. As the Hylé is, so are its mythical equivalents or expressions. This "disorderly movement" never ceases to disturb and convulse the infernal world, whose law and life and soul it is—however much these terms may clash with the unruly, quasi-mechanical and absurd character of such a chaos. The Kingdom of Evil is one perpetual rending, constant struggle of self against self, unremitting intestine warfare, permanent anarchy, auto-destruction. All its members lift their hands against each other, subject against subject, Archon against Archon, vassal against Monarch. Hostility, fury, implacable jealousy compel them to throw themselves against each other, to fight and rend and devour.² Everywhere revolt, always the menace of plots hatched by the demons against their chief. On this world of hatred and rottenness, self-generated, self-corrupted, on the suicidal madness that haunts it, on the rhythm of death which endlessly and aimlessly punctuates its infinite duration, nothing more striking could have been written than this further passage likewise preserved by Severus of Antioch.³

"The Tree of Death is divided into a large number [of trees]. There is war and cruelty. They are strangers to peace, wholly filled with wickedness, and never bear good fruit. The Tree [of Death] is divided against its own fruits, and the fruits [are divided] against the Tree. They are not united to that which engendered them, but all put forth a rotting scurf to corrupt the point of their insertion. They are not subject to their progenitor, but the whole Tree is evil through and through. Nothing good does it ever do, but is wholly divided against itself and each of its parts corrupts the part that is next it."

¹ Recollect here the conception which St. Augustine put on record from one of his youthful treatises, *De pulchro et apto*, written while he still adhered to Manichaeism (*Confessions*, iv, xv, 24). To the rational "monad", to the "mens sine ullo sexu" he there opposed a "substantia et natura summi mali", not derived from God, a "dyad", "iram in facinoribus, libidinem in flagitiis".

² To the numerous texts collected and cited by H. JONAS, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, i, p. 294, nn. 1-5, add SIMPLICIUS, in *Epict. enchirid.*, xxvii. p. 71, 19-22, ed. Dübner, and *Kephala*, xxiii, p. 68, 25-8.

³ *Hom.*, cxixiii, in KUGENER-CUMONT, op. cit., pp. 117-18.

And the Prince of Darkness, who reigns by the terror of his voice, or by the startling character of his apparitions, over this Empire heaving with latent rebellion and devastated by endless sedition, is himself the incarnation of all the fury of this disorder, all the senseless violence of this appetite for destruction, never at peace with himself, inflamed against all the others and against himself.¹ He is made up of ill-temper, anger, rage, envy, moved by nothing but the rancour and gall that inflames his yellow visage. Hardly had he risen as yet from obscurity than with his first gesture he flung himself into the devastation of his five kingdoms, engulfing all as he passed, striking blindly right and left, and spreading a trail of ruin and death to the lowermost depths of the hells into which he plunged.² He is hungry for flesh, thirsty for blood,³ carried away in his turn into a kind of revolt against his own subjects and preying on his own offspring, a revolt which in the end is turned against his own substance. As an image of desire which feeds, like care, on itself, self-consummated, self-consumed, the Manichæan devil, like the Mazdean Āz or Āzi, finding nothing more for his insatiable greed to devour, finally devours himself.

It is significant that at all degrees of the infernal hierarchy, in all the inhabitants of the world of Darkness, the effect or expression of desire is to be found in acts of cannibalism, and ultimately of autophagy. Now the essential and the most ignoble phase of desire lies, for the Manichæan, in concupiscence.⁴ In the swarming cess-pool of the infernal world it is not too easy to distinguish the universal hand-to-hand mêlée from a general coupling of victor with vanquished, from an absorption of vanquished by victor, in short from an assuagement of the "libido". Between fornication (and here every sexual act passes for that) and eating (particularly of animal flesh) the Manichæan imagination and ethic always suspected close affinities; whether they took the ingestion of food for the goad of desire,⁵ or whether they saw each of these actions as an abominable bestiality in its own right, and

¹ Cf. TITUS OF BOSTRA, *adv. Manich.*, i, 33; P.G. 18, 1120 C.

² *Fihrist*, pp. 86-7, trans. FLUEGEL.

³ *Acta Archelai* XV (xiii), 10, p. 25, 1-2, ed. Beeson.

⁴ Cf. the essay of R. Caillois on the praying mantis (*Le mythe et l'homme* (Paris, 1938), pp. 39-99).

⁵ Cf. the Turfan fragment T ii D 173 (A.P.A.W. (1911), pp. 16-17); *Kephala*, lxxxvi, p. 215, 13-25; *Acta Archelai*, xvi, 7, p. 27, 1-6. The mediaeval Cathari had a similar theory, according to ALAIN OF LILLE, *Con. haeret.*, i, 74; P. L. 210, 376 B).

as equally looking to the satisfaction of carnality. Notably, it is to a series of acts of cannibalism and of sexuality that the myth goes on to attribute the origin of the human race.¹ The "Abortions", a diabolical progeny, fall onto the earth. There they copulate between themselves and multiply in swarms, thus giving birth to the animal kingdom. Then two major demons—one male, one female—devour the progeny of the Abortions in order to assimilate their whole substance, and, coupling in their turn, engender the first human pair. Descendants as we are of Adam and Eve, and through them of the demons, we are marked with the double seal of this satanic heredity, with the two conjoint and indelible stigmata of Evil: the one visible, the exterior form of our bodies, the other internal, consisting of the concupiscence inherent in our flesh, in our "dark ego", forever reborn and always menacing. Hence also the diabolic note attaching to the perpetuity of the human race here below. From sin is born sin. Parents engender children who engender other children, and from these still more will be engendered to engender in their turn—and so on indefinitely. A process without purpose or term (unless indeed a more widespread use of the ascetic practices recommended by the sect should happen to arrest it); a mechanical and criminal succession by which, as the unconscious agent of the designs of Matter, humanity prolongs its slavery and postpones the hour of its final liberation, continually "decanting" the sparks of the Light it holds imprisoned in itself into the darkness of new bodies, always riveting them with new fetters in a new prison; an absurd iteration of ever new frustrations, which, when all is said, is nothing other than the reflection or the effect of the indefinite and gratuitous movement of Matter.

The same absurdity that attaches to Matter and Evil in its endless chaotic agitation attaches also to the consequences of Desire, and constitutes in fact what is basic in Desire itself. For Desire, too, is stupid in the perpetuity of its resurgence, in the contradictory law of its automatic rhythm, in the brutal, obstinate, *narrowly restricted* pertinacity of each of its manifestations. Aware of nothing beyond its own immediate satisfaction, it is wholly absorbed in this pursuit: no sooner aroused than destroyed, abolished in its own assuagement to be promptly reborn, and living only in the fleeting moment with each rebirth. So it is with

¹ Cf. FR. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, i, pp. 40-6.

the Prince of Darkness. He has all the implacable hardness, all the virulent and ever formidable force of Desire, whether it pleases him to hide and pounce on his prey at a bound, whether he shrinks up into himself or flings out his limbs, whether he goes to cover or stalks abroad, erect or crouching, crawling or gliding. Like Desire, he goes hot and cold. Like Desire, he wraps himself up in all manner of glamour, ductile and apt for every metamorphosis, able to assume the most diverse shapes, to act by enchantment and the siren charm of his voice. The "magic" of Desire, a stale enough metaphor for us, must here be taken literally. All the strength of Satan is in magic; it rests on incantations and sorceries. But not even the powers of the malefic Sorcerer can overstep the limits of the pure present. His faculties of apprehension and comprehension have no scope beyond that, and seize nothing but the object here and now immediately presented. In that respect he is hardly superior to the other demons, his subordinates. These are doubtless more obtuse, understanding only their own language and, as *Kephalaïon* vi remarks, failing to grasp the meaning of the words of their suzerain; whereas he, for his part, understands everything that falls from their lips. However, both subjects and monarch have this in common, that they apprehend nothing but what falls for the moment under their eyes. The first of the Manichaean documents cited by Severus¹ says this:

"These members of the Tree of Death do not know each other, have no notion of each other. For none of them recognises anything more than the sound of his own voice, and they see [only] what is before their eyes. When one of them cries out they hear [him.] So much they perceive, and rush impetuously towards the voice. Beyond that they know nothing."

And similarly when dealing with the King of Darkness the *Kephalaïon* (vi and xxvii) declares with remarkable insistence that "he perceives and knows nothing but what is immediately before his eyes", that "there is but one thing he does not know—what is distant; he sees nothing that is far off, but what stares him in the face that he sees and hears and knows". He grasps only the outside of the other Archons, their exterior movements, the signs

¹ *Hom.*, cxxiii, in KUGENER-CUMONT, op. cit., pp. 122-3.

they make to each other, and their voices in so far as these reach his ears. Never does he penetrate the secrets of their hearts, or seize their thoughts or intentions as they come to birth, or divine whither they tend: the beginning and end alike escape him. Or again: only when his vassals stand before him face to face is he in the way to see them and detect their designs; the moment they move away and absent themselves he falls back into ignorance. In other words, his intelligence is as narrow as his field of vision is restricted. It lacks all penetration. It apprehends, and that only from the outside, nothing but the superficial and material appearances of things and persons. Awake to appearances and signs, it remains closed to realities and to inner depths. Impotent to follow and interpret the organic sequence of successive events or the continuity of a process of thought, whether in itself or another, it reaches and reacts to nothing but the instantaneous. All that it grasps in any given instant is merely the fortuitous and fleeting presence of such and such an object, such and such a person, such and such an event. Without principle or end itself, it is wholly occupied and absorbed in the pure present, of which it can neither infer the antecedents nor foresee the consequences.

This, it seems to me, is the most curious, perhaps even the most fundamental feature of the Manichæan conception of the devil. At any rate it is the one that best sums up and proves what I have tried to establish in the preceding pages. The Prince of Darkness is a mythical projection of one sole reality, physical and psychological at once, expressing itself on the physical plane in terms of Matter, and on the psychological plane in terms of Desire. Whether we take it as Matter or as Desire, this reality is at bottom nothing but a disorderly and furious movement, experienced in either case as an evil and conceived as constituting Evil itself. It is evil because it is infinite and irrational, without beginning or fulfilment, without cause or aim, without any kind of reason whatsoever. It is evil because by that very fact it is "stupid", because it is naked contingency, the very essence of everything—whether pure chaos or brute instinct—that absurdly and perpetually appears, disappears and reappears in each fleeting moment of the flux of time. An hypostasis or son of Matter or Desire, the Satan of Manichæism in the last analysis incarnates the carnal condition of man reduced to his own bare self, sheer existence in time seized in its most denuded aspect, the senseless

“life”, illusory and contradictory, to which the creature, if deprived of all recourse to the peace of the Spirit and the salvific lights of Revelation and Intelligence, is here and now condemned in the eyes of the sect; and who, abandoned wholly to himself, is nothing but ruin, destruction, sin, hell and death—a despairing night.

HENRI-CHARLES PUECH

THE YEZIDIS OF MOUNT SINDJAR

THE KURDISH race, which inhabits the mountains of Upper Mesopotamia, divides, from the standpoint of the Moslem religion, into two hostile groups: Sunnite Shâfi'ites passing into Yezidism, and Shi'ites running to the extremism of the Kizilbash and the Ahlé Haqq. A curious cleavage, this, which reappears on the south-eastern slopes of the Pamir, between the Marwâniya (Kelunchah) and the Ismaelians.

The Yezidis are anti-Shi'ite Sunnites, for Yezid, their eponym, was the Umyyadi Khalif, who brought about the death of the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, Husayn, the martyr of the Shi'ites. Have we here a truly correct etymology? "Ized", in Iranian, means "god", and the Kurds, being pure Iranians, were originally Mazdeans.

Yezidism is, in any case, the specific form of Kurdish Islam, and the noble women of the old Kurdish clans are Yezidis by belief.

This religious group was formed around certain Umayyadi refugees, and one of them, Sheik 'Adî, who died in the year 1162 of our era at Lâlîsh, which now bears his name, founded a religious order, the 'Adawiya, which among other saints venerates a mystic, Hallâj, who during his lifetime incurred the special hatred of the Shi'ites, and was put to death by them in A.D. 922 at Baghdad. The Yezidis regarded Hallaj as the seventh and last of the apotropean saints, the Herald of the Last Judgment. Now Hallaj, unanimously condemned by the doctors for his doctrine of deification by divine love, had been considered by the first Ash'arite scholastics, Bâqillânî, Isfarâînî, and Juwaynî, as a damned instrument of Iblis, that is to say, of Satan; who, according to the Mussulmans, incurred damnation by his jealous and exclusive love of the pure idea of the deity.

On predestinarian grounds, certain other Ash'arite theologians, Gurgâ nî and Qushyrî, holding that love sanctifies, canonised Hallâj along with Satan; damned, both of them, by pure love, refusing all reward. Sheik 'Adî and the 'Adawiya shared this doctrine

The books in which it is to be found today in the Kurdish dialect (the subject of a study by Bittner) are the *Kitâb aljalwah* (Book of Revelation), and the *mashafê-rash* (Black Book). They are written in a popular style, far removed from the aesthetic refinement of the above-mentioned theologians. But they recommend that Satan should be considered as a fallen archangel, now pardoned, to whom God has committed the government of the world and the management of the transmigration of souls. He is called "Malak Tawûs", the "Peacock Angel", on account of his recovered spiritual splendours. Like him, the Seven Saints or Sandjaq are represented in bronze in the form of peacocks, notably Mansûr (=Hallâj).

There are still about 60,000 Yezidis, but their numbers diminish on account of persecution. They call themselves "Dasni".

Menzel has given a good bibliography in the *Encyclopédie de l'Islam* (1934.) Since then Ismaïl bey Tchôl, M. Guidi, G. Furlani, Lohéac, Ahmad pasha Taymur and R. Lescot have made further researches, the original promoters of this research being Parry and the Rev. P. Anastase, O. C. D.

LOUIS MASSIGNON

PART III
POSSESSION AND DIABOLISM

DEMONIACS IN THE GOSPEL

A REMARKABLE episode in Christ's struggle against Satan—a struggle whose vast proportions we know—is set before us in the Synoptic Gospels: the deliverance of individuals possessed by the devil. We shall consider in turn (1) the facts, (2) the problems they raise, and (3) the principles proposed by theology for their solution.

I. THE FACTS

(1) A preliminary series of texts affirm, in a general way, that the possessed were restored to normal health by Jesus. These possessed are distinguished from the merely sick; but first texts give us no detailed description either of the trouble afflicting the patients or of the means employed to free them from it.

Jesus "was preaching in Galilee and casting out devils" (Mark i. 39).¹ Before the Sermon on the Mount "a very great multitude of people . . . came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits were cured" (Luke vi. 18); for "they presented to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them" (Matt. iv. 24).

When the emissaries of John the Baptist came to ask Jesus whether He was really the Messiah, before replying, "he cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits, and to many that were blind he gave sight" (Luke. vii. 21).

During His public life Jesus was commonly accompanied by the Twelve, and by "certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities" among whom were "Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth" (Luke. viii. 2; cf. Mark xvi. 9).

¹ We follow the historical order as set out by the synopsis of Lagrange-Lavergne and here cite the texts as given in the Douay version.

When Jesus sent the Twelve to preach the Kingdom of God in Galilee, He charged them to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils" (Matt. x. 8), thus giving them "power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases" (Luke ix. 1; cf. Mark vi. 7). In the course of this or another such mission John "saw a certain man casting out devils in thy name" (i.e. in Jesus' name), and, taking offence at this, forbade him "because he followeth not with us". The Master disapproved of this rather narrow-minded zeal, but did not deny the fact of the expulsion of the devils: "Forbid him not; for there is no man that doth a miracle in my name and can soon speak ill of me" (Luke ix. 49 and Mark ix. 38).

The seventy-two disciples received a mission similar to that of the Twelve, to preach the coming of the Kingdom of God in Galilee and Judaea. They "returned with joy, saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name". And He approved of them, saying: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet rejoice not in this that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 17-20).

When the Pharisees let Him know of Herod's threats, He replied: "Go and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am consummated" (Luke xiii. 32).

The power thus exercised by Jesus was to become the prerogative of the apostles after His death. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues . . . they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17. 18). And so indeed it came about as is testified in the Acts of the Apostles (viii. 7; xvi. 16-18; xix. 12-17).

Let us note before we go further that it is not simply the Evangelists who here speak of casting out devils, but Jesus Himself who (1) claims the power to cast them out and distinguishes it from that of healing diseases, (2) appeals precisely to this power to vindicate His Messiahship, and (3) hands it on expressly to His disciples as having a special place among the miracles they are to work in His name. We shall have occasion to return to these remarks.

Now let us turn to the more detailed descriptions of the expulsions of devils.

The first occasion on which Jesus met a demoniac is highly dramatic. It took place in the synagogue at Capharnaum, at the beginning of His public life. "And in the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean devil, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying: Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Hold thy peace and go out of him. And when the devil [having "torn" or convulsed him—Mark i. 26] had thrown him into the midst he went out of him, and hurt him not at all" (Luke iv. 33-5; cf. Mark i. 23-6).

Similar scenes are mentioned in the Gospel record of a day spent by the Saviour at Capharnaum. He healed the sick. "And devils went out from many, crying out and saying: Thou art the Son of God! And rebuking them he suffered them not to speak [and to say who he was] for they knew that he was Christ" (Luke iv. 41; cf. Mark i. 34; Matt. viii. 16). St. Mark, speaking of like happenings, tells us (iii. 11-12): "And the unclean spirits when they saw him, fell down before him, and they cried, saying: Thou art the Son of God. And he strictly charged them that they should not make him known."

It was by action from a distance that the devil was cast out of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman. The mother, a Gentile, came to Jesus and fell at His feet and besought Him, without allowing herself to be put off by two rebuffs; and Jesus said to her at last: "For this thy saying [that the whelps may eat of the fallen crumbs of the children] go thy way: the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come into her house she found the girl lying upon the bed and that the devil was gone out" (Mark vii. 25-30; cf. Matt. xv. 21-8).

In the case of the deformed woman cured in the synagogue on the sabbath, we must attend carefully both to the description of the infirmity and to its attribution to the devil by the Evangelist, St. Luke, and by Jesus Himself.

"And he was teaching in the synagogue on their sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bowed together, neither could she

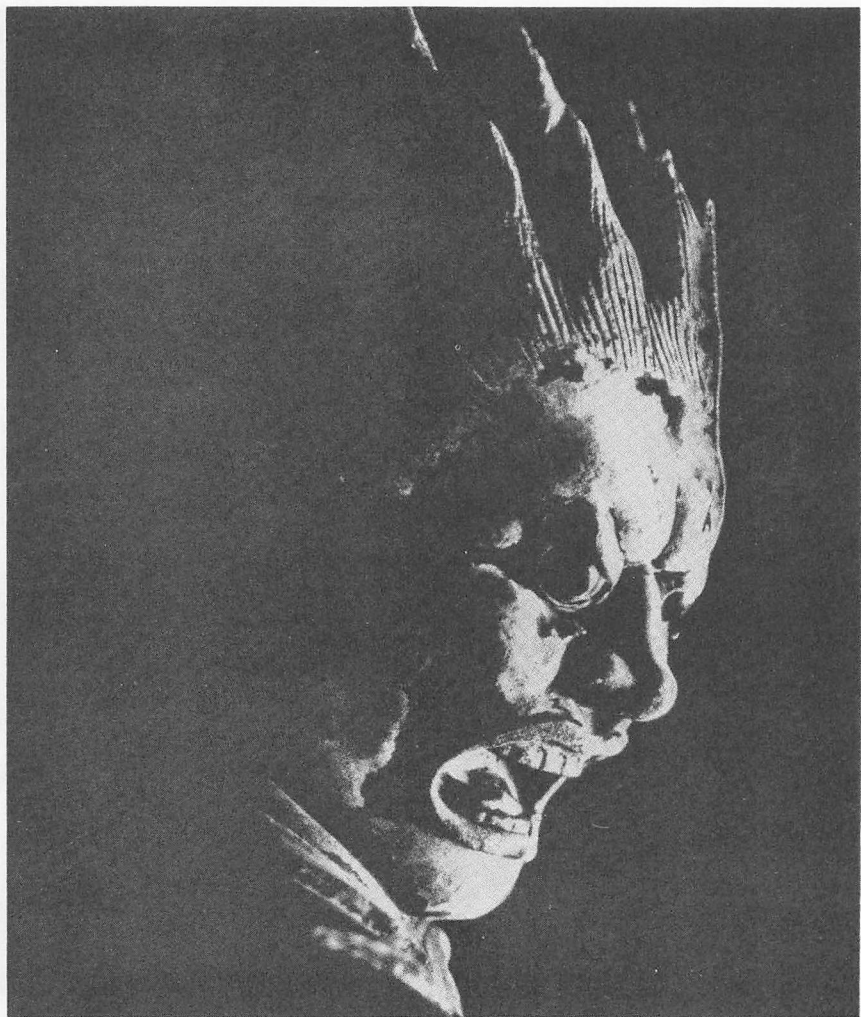
look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him and said to her: Woman thou art delivered from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue (being angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath), answering said . . . And the Lord answering him said: Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you on the sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead them to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from the bond on the sabbath day?" (Luke xiii. 10-17).¹

To this case of possession, whose effects, as described, are strikingly similar to the symptoms of a local paralysis, we must add two others in which the descriptive analysis is more picturesque and more complete. Both are reported by the three Synoptic Gospels, by St. Matthew with sobriety, by St. Luke with precision, and by St. Mark with a wealth of vivid detail that seems to come straight from life. We shall reproduce St. Mark's accounts, completing them here and there when necessary with the bracketed matter from the other Evangelists.

Here first is the case of the possessed of Gerasa.

Jesus lands on the eastern side of the lake of Genesareth, in the country of the Gerasenes.

¹ Here, in this study of the Gospel narratives, and following the practically unanimous voice of the exegetes, we shall designate as possessed all those subjects said by Jesus to have a devil; a devil producing a disturbance of health which ceases on his expulsion. The proof of this active presence of the devil lies in the word and attitude of the divine Master. The modern exorcist, guided by the Ritual, is deprived of this infallible support in judging the case submitted to him. He has to begin by establishing the presence and activity of the devil, by noting the preternatural phenomena which indicate this presence and this activity. He has to avail himself here of the "principle of economy" (cf. the article by F. X. Maquart, below, p. 178), which very rightly demands that the diabolical explanation shall not be entertained if any natural explanation is adequate. But in the Gospel the question is settled already: the presence and action of the devil is a datum. Even in the case of the deformed woman, where it is not explicitly stated that the devil is *here and now present* in the patient, and from whom he is not, *in so many words*, cast out, the cause of the malady is nevertheless said by St. Luke to have been "a spirit of infirmity" who had afflicted her for eighteen years; and Jesus Himself goes on to say that the spirit's name was Satan, who had "bound her, lo, these eighteen years"—and "ought not this daughter of Abraham to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" Père de Tonquédec is quite justified in remarking (see above, p. 40) that for a present-day exorcist there is here no case of a *possession* (in the modern and full sense of the term) that could be strictly *demonstrated* by the tests at his disposal; but in the Gospel, nevertheless, the



Pl. 9. The head of Shitenno, guardian of the divine kingdom. Japanese, Nara-period, 8th century A.D. (Photo. Musée Guimet.)



Pl. 10. Romanesque demon, from a capital at Vézelay. 12th century. (Photo. Marburg.)

"And as he went out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the monuments a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him, not even with chains. For having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains, and broken the fetters in pieces: and no one could tame him. And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones. [He had gone unclothed for a long time—Luke.]

"And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and adored him. And crying with a loud voice he said: What have I to do with thee, Jesus the Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. For he said unto him: Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him: What is thy name? And he saith to him: My name is Legion, for we are many. And he besought him much, that he would not drive him away [into the Abyss—Luke] out of the country.

"And there were there near the mountain a great herd of swine, feeding. And the spirits besought him saying: Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And Jesus immediately gave them leave. And the unclean spirits, going out, entered into the swine: and the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea.

"And they that fed them fled and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done: and they come to Jesus, and they see him that was troubled with the devil, sitting, clothed, and well in his wits: and they were afraid. . . . And they began to pray him that he would depart from their coasts. And when he went up into the ship, he that had been troubled with the devil began to beseech him that he might be with him. And he admitted him not, but saith to him: Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee."

And this he did not only in "the whole city" (Luke), but "in Decapolis" (Mark v. 1-20).

malady is presented as due to the devil, and the cure as a rupture of a bond established and maintained by Satan. That is why the Gospel commentators commonly reckon it among the cases of "possession".

Of all the Gospel narratives this is the one that gives us the clearest characterisation of the devils in possession of a human organism. There they create and maintain certain morbid disturbances not far removed from madness. They possess a penetrating intelligence, and know who Jesus is. They prostrate themselves before Him unblushingly, beseeching, adjuring Him by God not to send them back to the Abyss, but rather to allow them to go into the swine and take up their abode there. Hardly have they entered into the swine, than with a display of power not less surprising than their versatility, they bring about the cruel and wicked destruction of the poor beasts in which they had begged refuge. Craven, obsequious, powerful, malicious, versatile and even grotesque—all these traits, here strongly marked, reappear in varying degrees in the other Gospel narratives of the expulsion of devils.¹

The demoniac whom Jesus found at the foot of the Mountain of the Transfiguration, and whose malady baffled the apostles, displays, along with deaf-mutism, all the clinical indications of epilepsy. Here once more we shall have to turn to St. Mark's account (ix. 14-28):

“And coming to his disciples he saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes disputing with them. . . . And he asked them: What do you question about among you? And one of the multitude answering said: Master, I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit; who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away: and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. Who answering them said: O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him.

“And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about

¹ The ridiculous, vulgar and malicious side of diabolical possessions appears also in the narratives of the Acts, notably in xix. 13-17, where at Ephesus we meet with “some also of the Jewish exorcists who went about [and] attempted to invoke over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus. . . . And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, that did this”. They had cause enough to rue it, for one fine day one of those possessed replied: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

foaming. And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy; and oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us. And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief.

"And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him, and enter not any more into him. And crying out and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead. But Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose [and Jesus restored him to his father—Luke.]

"And when he was come into the house, his disciples secretly asked him: Why could we not cast him out? And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

II. THE PROBLEMS

How find the correct interpretation of these data?

(1) Although the Evangelists sometimes use the word "heal" or "cure" in connection with the deliverance of the possessed by Jesus,¹ the contexts themselves suggest that this "healing" has to be taken in a special sense. Thus the woman with the bent back is represented as "delivered from her infirmity" in Luke xiii. 12, after having been "bound by Satan these eighteen years", and now she is to be "loosed from this bond" (verse 16). So also the epileptic is "cured" but precisely because the "unclean spirit" has been "cast out" (Luke ix and parallels). The fact is that the deliverance of possessed persons, in all cases where it is related in any detail, is presented under conditions which clearly differentiate it from the cure of mere disease.

To be precise, the plight of the possessed is attributed to "the devil", a hidden, malicious being, capable of tempting even Jesus; a being who is "the power of darkness", and has "his hour" during the events of the Passion; who acts with as much deceit and wickedness as intelligence. He "enters" the possessed, he

¹ Cf. Luke vii. 21; viii. 2; ix. 43, etc.

"dwells" there, and "comes back"; he "enters" into the swine. The possessed "has a devil", an "unclean devil" (Luke iv. 33); he is an "unclean spirit" (Mark i. 23). The devil "goes out" of the possessed, and into another place, into the desert, into the swine, into the Abyss; and that precisely because he is "driven"—that is the word most commonly used. When Jesus approaches he shows "terror", he "falls down", "beseeches", declares that he "knows" the supernatural status of Jesus. The latter "speaks" to him, "questions" him, gives him "commands" and "permissions" and imposes silence. *Not one* of these traits can be found in the behaviour of the merely sick towards Jesus, nor in the way in which Jesus sets out to cure them.

(2) The attitude of Jesus in the presence of the possessed does not allow a Catholic, nor even any attentive historian, to think that in acting and speaking as He did He was merely accommodating Himself to the ignorances and prejudices of His contemporaries.

What is in question here is no mere current mode of speech (as when we describe the sun as "rising" from the horizon, and "going up" towards the zenith), but a doctrine that expresses an essential aspect of the mission of the God-man in this world: "In hoc apparuit Filius Dei ut dissolvat opera diaboli" (i John iii. 8). On points of such importance touching the supernatural world Jesus could by no means indulge in tolerant equivocations. He never used them. Look at the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. There we have the case of the man born blind. The disciples, either personally mistaken or possibly sharing the views of the Essenes or some other Jewish sect, asked the Master: "Who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They were not alone in putting down his blindness to sin. When the man, now cured, was standing up bravely to the interrogation of the Sanhedrin, they cut him short with: "Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" Here then we are certainly in the presence of a prejudice or error common among the contemporaries of Jesus. But since this error touched the supernatural order Jesus allowed Himself no conformism; He would entertain nothing but the simple truth, and put it without compromise: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Now Jesus, who would not so much as once let pass a mistaken word dropped on matters of religion, *never* corrected His disciples' expressions on the subject of demoniac possessions. And He spoke of them Himself in identical terms, strictly squaring His action in the matter with the ideas and language of His countrymen. It is plain that He simply adopted them.

What is more, He took up a position of His own on the point and defended it. The controversy is set out in all three Synoptic Gospels (Luke xi. 14-26; Mark iii. 22-30; Matt. xii. 22-45). Jesus had cast out a devil who had made his victim blind and dumb. The Pharisees accused Him of driving out lesser devils by the power of Beelzebub, "Prince of the devils". The occasion was a good one to let them know that there was here no question of demoniac possession but only of disease. Jesus did not seize it. The devils, he said, do not cast each other out; if they did, they would long ago have put an end to their own "kingdom". . . . No, they are driven out because they have now come up against someone "stronger than themselves", and their defeat is the sign that "the kingdom of God is come upon you". This defeat will not prevent Satan from launching a counter-offensive, and it may even have a striking success in some cases, since the devil driven out will come back "with seven other spirits more wicked than himself". That is because human bad faith, such as had just been shown in the Pharisees' accusation of Jesus, constitutes that voluntary and obstinate blindness called "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost", and opens the way to the definitive return of the reinforced enemy. Here then, as elsewhere, and even more clearly than elsewhere, it is evident that Jesus speaks of the devil and of possession by the devil as realities, and that on this point He finds no errors to dispel either among His disciples or His adversaries.

The true problem raised by these possessions does not lie there. We must now try to formulate it in precise terms and see whether this may suggest some line of thought on which its solution may be found.

(3) Let us abstract for the moment from the method that Jesus adopts in delivering the possessed and consider only the symptoms of their state as given in the more or less detailed descriptions preserved in the Gospels. It can hardly be doubted that a study of the morbid symptoms, and of these *alone*, would lead every

doctor to see in the deformed woman a paralytic, in the energumen of Gerasa a furious madman, in the child healed on the morrow of the Transfiguration an epileptic—and so on. Moreover, each possession that is individually set before us is accompanied by an infirmity: the devil strikes his victim dumb (Matt. ix. 32; xii. 22; Mark ix. 16; Luke xi. 14); deaf and dumb (Mark vii. 32; xi. 24); dumb and blind (Matt. xii. 22); “lunatic” (Matt. xvii. 14); he provokes convulsive crises (Mark i. 26; Luke iv. 35; and especially Mark ix. 18–20 and parallels above cited). From a purely medical standpoint all these morbid phenomena are closely connected with a diseased state of the nervous system. We can readily appreciate how a psychiatrist might be tempted to isolate these phenomena, to base his whole judgment on nothing else, and to conclude that under the name of “possession” the Gospels present us simply with cases of neurosis. Now at last we face the problem of daemonic possession in all its force.

(4) But to set out to solve this problem from a purely medical standpoint is to follow a false trail. Only a part of the facts could be thus explained. How do these neurotics recognise and proclaim the Messiah? How could their disorders be instantaneously transferred to a herd of swine and bring about its destruction? How comes it that the Thaumaturge here acts by threats not directed against the patient himself, but against another? How is it that He always effects by one brief word a cure that is instantaneous, complete and final? Think of the time a modern psychiatrist needs, the slow and laborious methods of persuasion he employs, in order to “cure”—when he does cure—or even to ameliorate the disorders of his pitiable clientèle.

These questions become still more pressing when we remember that all the ills enumerated above—dumbness, deafness, blindness, paralysis, apparently due to the same neuropathic cause—are often met with in the Gospel unaccompanied by any mention of the devil, and are cured by means that have absolutely nothing in common with these imperious and threatening exorcisms, or with conversations with an interlocutor who is other than the patient. We must cite some examples of this.

Here is the case of the deaf-mute of Mark vii. 32–5 (the Greek text makes him a “deaf-stammerer” which still more clearly indicates the nervous character of the trouble).

“And taking him from the multitude apart he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting he touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven he groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.”

No mention of the devil, no threats, only a few symbolical gestures with a word expressing their meaning. It is simply a miraculous cure of a nervous malady. It is not the expulsion of a devil.

Everybody remembers the cure from a distance of the paralysed servant of the centurion of Capharnaum who declared himself unworthy to receive Jesus under his roof (Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10); also that of the paralytic whose zealous friends uncovered the roof of the house where Jesus was teaching, and let down the bed with the patient at Jesus' feet; and whom the Master cured with a word affirming that “the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins” (Mark ii. 1-12 and parallels). Once more, no threats, no exorcisms, but words full of kindness for both centurion and paralytic, with no attribution of the illness to the malice of the devil.

And here is the cure of the blind man¹ as related by St. Mark (viii. 22-6):

“And they came to Bethsaida; and they bring to him a blind man, and they besought him that he would touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the town: and spitting upon his eyes, laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything. And looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees, walking. After that again he laid his hands upon his eyes and he began to see and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly. And he sent him into his house.”

Here, if we do not mistake, is the sole case in the Gospels of a “progressive” miraculous cure, effected, however, in a few

¹ It is not certain whether this particular case of blindness can be put down to nervous causes: unlike the case of the deaf and blind demoniac (Matt. xii. 22) noted above. The comparison shows at least that blindness, whatever its immediate cause, whether nervous or other, was sometimes taken by Jesus for a *disease* to be cured without exorcism, and sometimes for the result of *possession*, to be put an end to by expelling the devil.

moments and without any of the long and complicated methods of modern psychiatry. But here again are no devils, no threats, no commands to "go out of him", and no exorcism.

It will be seen from these texts that the two notions of "nervous malady" and "diabolic possession" do not always coincide exactly. The Gospel presents possessions accompanied by neuroses, and neuroses pure and simple. The means used to restore the patients to their normal state also differ according to which of these two categories the subjects belong to. Any simple identification of possession with a nervous malady is incompatible with the Gospel. After all these explanations and détours we can now at last condense the enunciation of the real problem raised by these Gospel narratives into the following formula:

Whence comes it that diabolical possession is always accompanied in these descriptions by the characteristic clinical signs of an abnormal state of the nervous system? Can we furnish an explanation, or indicate the cause, of this strange but none the less regular concomitance?

III. PRINCIPLES OF THE SOLUTION

To the question thus precisely put, mystical theology (falling back on dogmatic theology and on scholastic philosophy) provides important elements of the answer. We must now bring these elements together into some kind of synthesis. If, in so doing, our language seems at times a trifle technical, we trust the reader will excuse it.

Scholastic philosophy distinguishes two groups of faculties within the one indivisible human soul. One group belongs to the sensible order—imagination and sensibility; and the other to the intellectual—intelligence and will. When all is duly ordered in a human soul its activity is directed by the will, which commands both the imagination and the sensibility, according to the lights it receives from a reason informed by the truth. But reason, in its turn, under the normal conditions of its exercise here below, is only capable of attaining to the truth if the sense faculties provide it with a suitable aliment that they themselves have prepared. This interaction between the faculties affects also the will, whose decisions may be influenced, even very strongly, by the attractions brought to bear on it from the side of the sensibility.

However, the hierarchy of the faculties remains, and the will *alone* sovereignly decides the *free* act, which it can carry out, postpone or omit as it chooses.

But—still following the teaching of scholastic philosophy—it is the above-mentioned spiritual soul that gives life to the body, animates or “informs” it. There are not two souls in man, one spiritual and the other corporeal, but one only. Now it is precisely by its lower powers, by the sensibility, that the immaterial soul puts out its hold on the body. In the one unique but composite being of the human individual, it is here that we find the point of junction. If we approach this indivisible point from the side of the spiritual soul, we shall call it the sensibility; if we approach it from the side of the life of the body, we shall present it as the vital movement proper to the nervous system. This very close union between the nervous system which pertains to the body, and the sensibility which is a faculty of the soul, permits the transmission of the commands of the will to the body and its movements. It is this union that is dissolved by death. It is this union that is weakened by mental disorders; for these are definable as disorders of the nervous system, carrying *ipso facto* a disorder of the same importance into the sensibility, and resulting at the limit in madness. Then the will finds all the machinery of command put out of action and no longer controls either the sensibility or the nervous system, which are both abandoned to their only two alternatives of dazed depression or of furious excitement.

Now it is precisely at this point of intersection and liaison between soul and body that theologians locate the action of the devil. He cannot, any more than other creatures, act directly on the intelligence or the will: that domain is strictly reserved to the human person himself and to God his Creator.¹ All that the devil can do is to influence the higher faculties indirectly, by provoking tendentious representations in the imagination, and disordered movements in the sensitive appetite, with corresponding perturbations in the nervous system, synchronised as it is with the sensibility. Thereby he hopes to deceive the

¹ This doctrine is developed *ex professo* by St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, i, q. 111 arts. 1 and 4, synthetised in I-II, q. 80, art. 2, and often recalled throughout the II Pars. (for example, in I-II, q. 9, art. 6) In mystical theology it is classic, see for example SCHRAM, *Theol. mystica*, t. I, §208-25 and especially §208: *Quid daemon in possessis possit*, 5. The mystics claim to have direct experience of this impotence of the demon, see e.g. ST. TERESA, *Life*, ch. xvii.

intelligence, especially in its practical judgments, and still more especially to weigh in on the will and induce its consent to bad acts. As long as things stop there we have "temptation".

But—with God's permission, accorded for the greater supernatural good of souls, or to put no constraint on the freedom of their malice—things need not stop there. The devil can profit from a disorder introduced into the human composite by a mental malady. He can even provoke and amplify the functional disequilibrium, and take advantage of it to insinuate and install himself at the point of least resistance. There he gets control of the mechanism of command, manipulates it at his pleasure, and so indirectly reduces to impotence both the intelligence and, above all, the will; which for their proper exercise require that the sensible data shall be correctly presented and that the means of transmission shall be in good working order. Such are the main lines of the theory of diabolic possession worked out by Catholic theology. And this theory is strengthened by other considerations which support and reinforce the explanations given above, and which will be dealt with in another article in the present volume. Let us merely note that if death, and so also the ills that prepare it, came into the world, this was "by the envy of the devil" turned against our first parents (Wisd. ii. 24), a thing that justifies the title by which he was stigmatised by Jesus: "homicida ab initio" (John viii. 44). By fastening, in possession, on the precise point at which body and soul are knit together but can be disassociated, he maintains the line of operations that he chose from the start in order to wage his war against humanity.

If all this is correct, we shall have to infer with the theologians that all true diabolic possession is accompanied, in fact and by a quasi-necessity, by mental and nervous troubles produced or amplified by the demon, and yet having manifestations and symptoms which are practically and medically identical with those produced by neuroses. The psychiatrist, therefore, is free to study these symptoms, to describe these mental troubles, and to indicate their immediate causes. There he stands on his own ground. But if, in the name of his science, he pretends to exclude *a priori*, and in all cases, any transcendent cause of the anomalies in question, then he trespasses beyond the bounds of his special competence. Precisely by confining himself to his own methods

he automatically foregoes any inquiry of this kind. Never will he find the devil at the term of his purely medical analysis, any more than the surgeon will find the soul at the point of his scalpel, or any more than the dog, seeing his master in anger, can estimate the moral or immoral character of these strange gesticulations: all that belongs to another order. But the doctor who wants to remain a complete man, above all if he enjoys the light of the faith, will never exclude *a priori*, and in some cases may well suspect, the presence and action of some occult power behind the malady. He will hand over its investigation to the philosopher and the theologian, allowing himself to be guided by their methods (to be dealt with in another article of this book); and he will have enough modesty to remember that where his medical science, brought to bear on a woman who cannot hold herself up straight, will see nothing but a partial paralysis of eighteen years' standing, the penetrating and infallible glance of Jesus discerned and asserted the presence of the devil putting forth all his hatred against a daughter of Abraham.

With this, then, we return to the Gospel and to its diabolical possessions. It is precisely to account for it all that Catholic theologians have elaborated the theory sketched above. It is the business of the psychologists and the doctors to complete the sketch by providing it with all the precise analyses and formulae which the progress of modern science permits and requires. It is also for them to say whether it would not be very advantageous, for the medical profession and theologians alike, to drop the attitude of suspicious isolation in which they stand to each other, and to unite their efforts and methods with a view to obtaining a truly adequate interpretation of facts relating to several complementary branches of human knowledge—facts such as the diabolic possessions of the Gospel and their healing by Jesus.

EXORCISM AND DIABOLICAL MANIFESTATION

TO REPEL the assaults of the devil the Church does not lack arms. Her divine Founder pledged His word that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her". She possesses very efficacious spiritual weapons. The apostles were given power, both for themselves and their successors, to cast out Satan; and the office of Exorcist is one of the four minor orders conferred on the future priest. The exorcist has a two-fold power directed against the two-fold action of the devil on men: temptation and possession. Against the first he uses the *ordinary* exorcism, which is exemplified in the exorcisms of the rite of baptism. Against the second, which is preternatural, the Church uses the *solemn* exorcism which she does not allow her priests to practise at will. For them, as a general rule, the power is restricted, and the only persons authorised to exorcise the possessed are priests specially deputed to this office by the Church.

Various considerations have led to this strict reservation of the practice of solemn exorcism. The struggle of the exorcist against the demon is not free from moral or even physical dangers, and the Church neither will nor can lightly expose her ministers to these. From the standpoint of the patient, moreover, it would be gravely imprudent to rush into an exorcism in a case of merely apparent possession, when the trouble was really due to some mental disease. This might very well aggravate the ill instead of curing it. In spite of all the severity of the Church in this matter there is still room to regret the ill-considered and imprudent action of certain priests devoted to this dangerous ministry.

"Exorcism is an impressive ceremony, capable of acting effectively on a sick man's subconsciousness. The adjurations addressed to the demon, the sprinklings with holy water, the stole passed round the patient's neck, the repeated signs of the cross and so forth, can easily call up a diabolical mythomania in word and deed in a psyche already weak. Call the devil and you'll see him;

or rather not him, but a portrait made up of the sick man's ideas of him."¹ It is only to priests whose high moral worth protects them from all danger, and whose knowledge and judgment enable them to make a sure estimate of the case put before them, that the Church entrusts the dangerous task of pitting themselves against the devil.

For what is it that the exorcist has to do? Like a physician called in to an illness he has first to arrive at a diagnosis and then judiciously apply the remedy. He is asked to formulate a practical judgment, a judgment directed to action; not one that announces a speculative truth, like the narrator of historical fact or the man of science, but a practical truth: "in this case I shall have to exorcise the man, no doubt about it." This practical truth is formulated not with respect to an objective reality—"per conformitatem ad rem"—but to a right intention—"per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum," as St. Thomas puts it. But this *subjective* judgment is not to be formulated in the air in virtue of an *affective* complex or any current prejudices that may be floating about; it necessarily presupposes and falls back upon an *objective* judgment, a judgment of the conscience enunciating a "speculativo-practical" truth and taking the following form: "In this case all the indications, not indeed certainly but with high probability, point to an actual diabolical possession, and call for an exorcism."

In solving his problem, therefore, the exorcist—and this must be emphasised—has to avoid two opposite extremes. He must not forget, on the one hand, that the decision to be taken is practical, and that it would be too much to demand that speculative certitude proper to the historical narrator or scientist—the practical certitude required for action in contingent matters corresponding only to a speculative probability; and neither must he overlook, on the other hand, the objective conditions required to make his diagnosis prudent.

Benedict XIV, in his treatise on the Canonisation of Saints, a document of incontestable authority, brings out the distinction very well. In connection with cases of possession miraculously cured by the Beatus whose cause is under examination, he lays it down that when it comes to cases of exorcism the word of the exorcist himself is not to be held sufficient; and accordingly he

¹ PÈRE DE TONQUÉDEC, *Les maladies nerveuses ou mentales et les manifestations diaboliques*, pp. 82-3.

here requires at least two witnesses (c. 29). In his eyes, therefore, the judgment to be made by the exorcist is not of the same nature as the scientific and historical judgment necessary in vouching for miracle.

We have deemed it indispensable to insist on this distinction at the very outset of our study in order to isolate the precise problem to be solved. We shall thus avoid every bona fide objection, whether it be made by the scientist or the historian who might pursue it with an excess of critical rigour out of place in dealing with exorcism, or by the average believer, priest or layman, who might be led to judge in accordance with his own affective complex and without sufficiently thorough criticism.

I. IN PRIMIS NE FACILE CREDAT . . .

The Roman Ritual provides the exorcist with precise instructions, which, if strictly and judiciously carried out, should enable him to pronounce on the case with an easy conscience. The first is this: that "he should not at the outset allow himself to believe in possession too easily": "in primis ne facile credat aliquem a daemonis obsessum esse". So, then, above all things, suspicion! Far from leaving him to jump to the conclusion that he has to do with a possessed person, it expressly warns him to examine critically all he has been told and everything he sees that might, at first sight, suggest possession.

We find in the Acts of the National Synod of Rheims, held in 1583, the following warning: "Before the priest undertakes an exorcism, he ought diligently to enquire into the life of the possessed, into his condition, reputation, health and other circumstances: and should talk them over with wise, prudent and instructed people, since the too credulous are often deceived, and melancholics, lunatics, and persons bewitched often declare themselves to be possessed and tormented by the devil: and these people nevertheless are more in need of a doctor than of an exorcist."¹

A wise recommendation certainly, and one that is only too clearly called for. The ecclesiastical world is prone to a naïve credulity in this matter. When it encounters those who fall a prey to obsessions, to impulses or inhibitions violently opposed to their

¹ This text is cited by Dr. Marescot in his very remarkable report made in 1599 on the case of Marthe Brossier (cf. R. P. BRUNO DE J.-M, *La Belle Acarie*, 436-43).

usual temper, and who labour, as they often do, under the impression that they are victims of some alien and evil power, then at once it begins to think of the action of the devil and to recognise a true possession. "Here is a man who normally hates sin, blasphemy, impurity, cruelty and every kind of gross behaviour; and suddenly he finds himself strongly prompted to indulge in all he hates. Do these promptings come from himself? Is he not the passive victim of some alien power? Here is a lady, intelligent, educated, of high moral character, whose habitual speech is faultlessly polite, and suddenly she finds her head ringing with a phrase of brutal obscenity which she goes on repeating to herself mentally without ceasing. Surely it is not she who has conjured it up; she merely submits to the infliction with pain and disgust. Again, well brought up and pious persons find their minds filled with vulgar jests, with contemptuous and ironic phrases, abusive of persons and things entitled to the highest respect. That may be relatively harmless but worse follows. We meet with unhappy people who are harassed by sexual impulses, by masturbation, by the desire for amorous assignations and so forth, who sometimes struggle against them but also sometimes yield, with responsibility in some sort diminished as if they were driven on by an evil fate. Others finally—and this puts the last and boldest stroke to the diabolic picture—are haunted by the notion of giving themselves over to the devil or calling him up from the abyss. They do so sometimes, often also simply believe they have done so; or ask themselves again, in anguish of spirit, whether perhaps they have not done it. . . .

"Conversely, there are those who find themselves pulled up short before some action in which they are anxious to acquit themselves well. They are paralysed when they try to pray, their lips stick together and refuse to utter the words. A man in this condition may want to receive Holy Communion, but as soon as he kneels at the altar-rails his throat contracts, and he cannot swallow the Host. Others, again, cannot even enter the church without a strange sinking; their legs seem to give way beneath them and they feel ill. Hence perhaps eventually they come to suffer a revulsion from all religious things—a revulsion which in persons fundamentally Christian and pious causes great astonishment and consternation, so that they begin to think themselves under the dominion of the devil.

"Worse still: there are some unfortunate people who when they want to do this or that find themselves doing the very opposite. For example, they have only to try to recollect themselves and at once they are assailed by obscene thoughts about God, or Christ, or the Blessed Virgin; or else they are swept into a denial of various dogmas, into revolt, blasphemy and so on. Call to mind those priests who feel themselves invincibly drawn to invalidate the most important acts of their ministry. Here we might very easily be led to recognise the hand of 'the spirit that denies', of the spirit who everywhere sets himself in opposition to the work of God."¹

Why is it that the priest, faced with this kind of thing, is so ready to conclude to the presence of the devil? His theological formation and the daily exercise of his ministry dispose him beforehand and quasi-instinctively to the passing of moral judgments; and, finding it impossible to impute moral responsibility for acts so evidently discordant with the characters of their authors, he tends to assume the presence of a preternatural cause even when there is only question of the patient's "unconscious" or of acts devoid of liberty. The question he asks is: Virtuous or vicious? whereas he ought to ask: Normal or abnormal?

More commonly it is a case of an affective complex. The attitude of so many unbelieving scholars, who reject the supernatural *in toto* under the influence of an agnostic philosophy, leads him to fear infection with their incredulity if he entertains a doubt about the *presence* of malicious spirits, in whose *existence* his faith obliges him to believe. Or perhaps he allows himself to be impressed by the opposite attitude of certain believing doctors whose Cartesian formation leads them to appeal unduly to feeling in cases where only intelligence is competent. Or confusing, from some other cause, the marvellous with the supernatural, he demands solutions of faith when only science can give them.

The teaching of the Church ought to save him from this last mistake. She clearly distinguishes two types of the supernatural: the *essential* supernatural, or the supernatural properly so-called, the object of faith alone; and the *modal* or *marvellous* supernatural, the object of science.

"We give the name 'marvellous' to verifiable exterior phenomena which may suggest the idea that they are due to the

¹ P. DE TONQUÉDEC, op. cit., pp. 29-32.

extraordinary intervention of an intelligent cause other than man.”¹

A marvellous phenomenon is thus an observable phenomenon. Consequently it can be submitted to scientific examination. A sweat of blood, stigmata, diabolic manifestations, all belong to the category of the marvellous. They can be observed. A conversion, on the contrary, an interior work of grace, cannot in itself be a marvellous phenomenon.

The marvellous, furthermore, calls up the idea of an extraordinary intervention, an intervention by an intelligence that is other than that of man.

“The wonted aspect of the world, the order it displays, the marks of design it bears upon it, may already suggest the idea of the action of a higher intelligence. But this constant, common, expected action, having nothing exceptional about it, lies by that very fact outside the scope of our subject.”²

The phenomena of nature are subject to the laws of nature, and subject also to human activity. The genuinely marvellous, therefore, will be something that neither nature nor human action can explain.

To the believer the word “marvellous” suggests at first sight the idea of miracle, perhaps even the idea of the supernatural. The terms, however, are not synonymous. The word “supernatural” is a theological one, bearing an analogical meaning: the essential supernatural and the modal supernatural. The distinction is capital and governs the whole problem of the marvellous. Only the essential supernatural is the supernatural properly so-called, the supernatural simply. It points to a reality that surpasses nature. It is totally inaccessible to science, unknowable by natural means. Its very existence is not to be known with certainty save by way of revelation. The study of the essential supernatural belongs exclusively to the sphere of faith and theology. Science cannot study it even indirectly, in its effects, since grace does not suppress nature. Doubtless it corrects the failings of nature and helps it to its proper perfection; but in so doing it respects all the hesitations, all the devious windings of this poor psychology of ours. It is, therefore, not to be expected that the method of elimination, used by the doctors of the Bureau des Constatactions at Lourdes, if applied

¹ P. DE TONQUÉDEC, *Introduction à l'étude du merveilleux*, p. xiii.

² *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

to the study of "the duality in the souls of converts", could ever lead us to conclude that empirical facts of this sort are due to a transcendent intervention: God acting in the soul of the convert.¹ It has been well said that "it is a pure delusion to want to demonstrate grace by inductive methods".²

The case of the modal supernatural, to which category the marvellous belongs, is altogether different. It is supernatural only, as the name indicates, in its mode of production. It is essentially a natural phenomenon; but instead of being effected in conformity with the laws of nature, it comes about in an extraordinary way.³ Thus the sudden healing of a wound, or the knitting up of a bone, which nature normally brings about gradually, is only to be explained by the extraordinary intervention of a higher cause. The cure effected is not, in itself, beyond the powers of nature, but nature will not reconstitute the tissues instantaneously. There we have the extraordinary, the modal supernatural, the marvellous. It is, as its definition indicates, open to observation, being a phenomenon similar in nature to all other sensible phenomena. Whether slow or instantaneous, the reconstruction of tissue can be observed and can be registered by radiography. Thus the mode of production of the marvellous is itself also observable. It is equally easy to ascertain that a lesion which cannot naturally be healed in less than several weeks or months has, in fact, closed up suddenly. Thus the marvellous occurrence is observable, not simply as an occurrence, but also as marvellous, that is to say, as having been produced in opposition to, or outside the scope of, the laws of nature. We see, then, that the supernatural mode itself can be negatively established by science.

We say "negatively" because science, which is confined to the observable, can ascertain only that the phenomenon is produced in a way which, as far as our present knowledge goes,⁴

¹ PENIDO, *La conscience religieuse*, p. 29.

² J. MARÉCHAL, S.J., *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques* (Paris, 1924), p. 253.

³ Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Le sens du mystère*, pp. 42 ff.

⁴ R. Dalbiez pertinently remarks: "Science can say no more; it cannot foresee its own future limits. It belongs to metaphysics alone to establish that the fact studied is absolutely inexplicable in a natural way, that it demands the intervention of an intelligent cause that is other than man. Then, after that, theology properly so-called appears on the scene and applies its rules for the discernment of spirits in order to distinguish the divine preternatural from the daemonic. Sometimes, indeed, its intervention will be unnecessary, the question being already settled in favour of the divine by purely metaphysical arguments" (*Études Carmélitaines* (Oct. 1938), pp. 214-15).

is naturally inexplicable. The mission of science is to explain observed phenomena, and it either succeeds or does not succeed.

A positive explanation of the marvellous is beyond the power of science to give. From this point on we have to hand over to the philosopher or the theologian. The philosopher, if he is not a positivist or an agnostic, knows that God is the First Cause of all things. If certain marvellous occurrences point to the extraordinary intervention, not only of a higher intelligence but of the divine intelligence, since the event observed—a resurrection from the dead, for example, or a cure implying the production *ex nihilo* of flesh and bone—exceeds the power of every created or creatable being; then the philosopher can conclude to a miracle. But some phenomena that science admits to be authentically marvellous can be explained without recourse to the First Cause, their author being possibly a non-human created intelligence; and then the philosopher has to give way to the theologian, on whom lies the duty of determining whether the intervention in question is that of an angel or that of a demon. Events of this latter kind are qualified by the theologian as preternatural: they belong to the marvellous pure and simple, and, as such, are distinct from miracle, which is a marvel of a higher order, being necessarily attributable to God.

It belongs to the discernment of spirits to fix the character, whether miraculous or simply marvellous, of a phenomenon that science has declared inexplicable *in the actual state of our knowledge*. The difficulty raised by this last phrase must be dealt with by metaphysics. "It is useless to insist on the hidden virtualities of physical or psychological nature and on our ignorance of their possible scope: there are limits here which no sane mind will obstinately refuse to respect. We do not know the whole positive efficiency of natural forces, but we know some of their negative limitations. We do not know how far they will go, but we believe ourselves able to say that they won't go as far as this point or as far as that. By combining oxygen and hydrogen you will *never* get chlorine; by sowing wheat you will *never* get roses; and a human word will never of itself suffice to calm storms or raise the dead. There is no kind of possibility, even negative, that you can set against that; no 'perhaps', however much in the air it may be, is permissible here. If anyone, sowing wheat, should believe that

'perhaps' he might get roses, he must be in an abnormal state of mind."¹

There are three kinds of naturally inexplicable events which, surpassing as they do the order of all created or creatable nature, imply divine intervention; and all three are miracles.

First we have those that surpass nature in their very substance itself, so that nature cannot bring them about *in any way*. ("nullo modo"). The glorification of the human body is a case in point. Since heavenly glory pertains in itself to the supernatural order, it would be a contradiction to suppose that any created or creatable nature should be able to glorify a created body. Another example would be the passage of one body through another, bodies being naturally impenetrable.

The second class of miracles is concerned with things that nature could not do in this particular determinate manner, such as giving life to the dead or sight to a blind man deprived of the visual organ. Nature, no doubt, can give both life and sight; but it is totally powerless to give life to a dead man, since life does not quit a living body save in virtue of the incapacity of the latter to retain it; which implies an equal ineptitude to receive it again. God alone can give it back since He alone has power to re-adapt such a body to receive once more its departed soul. And a man without eyes will never see unless God bestows on him the organ which nature cannot produce save by the ordinary process of generation.

In the third category are those events which, without being in themselves above the powers of nature, are nevertheless produced in non-natural ways. This is the case with sudden cures of disease without resort to medical remedies, or an abundant fall of rain from a cloudless sky at the sole prayer of a thaumaturgist. This third species of miracle can happen in two ways, that is to say, either against the normal laws of nature or outside them. They are against nature when the miracle oversteps the natural properties of bodies. Fire naturally burns the human body it touches. In the case of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace the fire retained all its combustive power—since the soldiers who had to throw the children in were burnt alive—and yet it left the children unharmed. At other times the event must be put down to a miracle in spite of the fact that nature could produce it, on account

¹ P. DE TONQUÉDEC, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

of the absence of the instruments she needs to produce it (cures effected without remedies); or because it is produced instantaneously whereas nature can bring it about only slowly and progressively (sudden healings of wounds). In such cases we say that the event takes place *outside* the normal laws of nature.¹

It is for metaphysics to determine whether these events, which are properly miraculous, take place against or outside the laws of nature.

There are others, recognised by science as naturally inexplicable, on which metaphysics has nothing to say, because they do not appear to exceed the power of created or creatable natures. We shall not on that account dismiss the discernment of spirits in such cases. If these occurrences are due to a created intelligence, then—since we are dealing here only with the genuinely preternatural—this intelligence must be either daemonic or angelic. By what signs shall we distinguish the finger of God acting through His angels from the claw of the Evil One? St. Thomas mentions four. “First, the *efficacy of the agent that operates*: good spirits, acting in virtue of divine power, are able to make their prodigies durable; those of the demon, on the other hand, are likely to be short-lived. Next, *the useful character of the wonders worked*; those due to evil spirits are futile or bad . . . Thirdly, *the end aimed at*; those due to good spirits contribute to the edification of faith and morals; those of the malefic injure them. Finally, *the mode*: good spirits are proud to call down the blessing of God on their deeds, but the means used by the wicked are perverse and shameful.”²

If these signs are to have a probative value they will need to be handled with prudence. The devil is capable at times of performing prodigies that are durable³ and of good effect in order the better to deceive us. We are not to jump to the conclusion, as

¹ St. Thomas has given us two different classifications of miracles; concordant indeed, but not, as the manuals often incorrectly say, corresponding precisely member to member. The first occurs in the *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 105, art. 8; the second in the *De Potentia*, vi, art. 2, ad. 3. This is how they should be juxtaposed:

S.T., q. 105 art. 8

De Potentia, vi, art. 2, ad. 3

Three kinds of miracles.	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ As to the substance of the fact.} \\ 2. \text{ As to the matter in which it is effected.} \\ 3. \text{ As to the mode and the order in which it is effected.} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ Above the powers of nature.} \\ 2. \text{ Against the powers of nature.} \\ 3. \text{ Outside the powers of nature.} \end{array} \right\}$

² II *Sent.*, art. 7, q. 3, a. 1, ad 2; cf. I-II, q. 11, art. 4, ad 2.

³ Cf. the scriptural texts on the end of the world.

soon as we note these two signs, that the occurrence in question is of angelic origin; only a *concordant whole* of signs will justify that. If, on the other hand, the signs are discordant, or if all the diabolical signs are found together, then we must unhesitatingly conclude to the action of the devil.

Let us add a further remark which appears to us important. It would seem that in the present world-economy God no longer acts in a preternatural manner except by way of miracles, and for these He employs not angels but men and the saints in heaven. Under the Old Law He employed angels, as we see, for example, in the story of the young Tobias; but under the law of grace He seems to use them only as instruments of grace, leaving the marvellous to the devil.

And one last remark. We have already distinguished the *modal* supernatural—whether marvellous or miraculous—from the supernatural properly so-called or essential; it is to be distinguished further by a point on which it is proper to insist so as to avoid an error fairly common among theologians. Accustomed as they are to the study of essential supernature, which does not destroy nature but perfects it, they tend to forget, when dealing with the marvellous, that the verification of this latter must of necessity involve the elimination of any possible natural explanation. To speak of a phenomenon as open to a natural explanation and to admit its marvellous character at the same time on the ground that a supernatural explanation seems to be better, would be simply devoid of meaning.

It would be a very grave error to hesitate to adopt an attitude of great reserve when entering on an examination of an alleged daemonic occurrence, for fear of falling short of the exigencies of the faith. In philosophical terms it amounts to passing from one genus to another. It is to perpetrate a pure sophism.

II. NOTA HABEAT SIGNA. . . .

Once rid of this prejudice, common enough in the Catholic world, not to say the ecclesiastical—a prejudice against which a true and judiciously applied theological science should steel our hearts—here at last stands the exorcist in presence of the patient, and about to begin the examination of the case set before him. In what spirit will he enter on the task? How will he set about

solving the problems it presents? Here the Church propounds a second principle: "*nota habeat ea signa quibus obsessus dignoscitur ab iis qui vel atrabile, vel morbo aliquo laborant.*" The exorcist must know how to recognise the signs whereby the possessed may be distinguished from those suffering from melancholy or any other disorder.

Among the various manifestations that may suggest possession a certain number must clearly be put down to nervous or mental disease. They belong to psychiatry or neurology, and not to the religious ministry of the exorcist.

We have to set up a precise diagnosis, a thing that is sometimes difficult owing to the possible intermingling of morbid causes with real possession. How arrive at it? An elementary acquaintance with the various nervous or mental maladies will not suffice for the purpose. There are those who harbour a bias against submitting these cases to scientific examination. The fact that this is needed to ascertain, for example in a process of beatification, whether the saint in question has miraculously driven out the demon from the body of one possessed, will be admitted without any difficulty; but is it not perhaps excessive to require a scientific mode of procedure in order to set up a simple therapeutic diagnosis?

It is true enough that we cannot simply assimilate the case of the exorcist to that of the Postulator charged with the task of establishing the miraculous character of the deliverance of a possessed person by a thaumaturgist. His case is rather that of the doctor called in to an illness: he has to make a practical judgment; whereas the case of the Postulator in a process of canonisation is like that of the psychologist or man of science, aiming at the critical establishment of a speculative truth. If, for the doctor, there are cases in which a summary examination will suffice for a sure diagnosis, there are plenty of others in which, for the protection of the patient himself, he ought to have recourse to scientific methods and scientific instruments. These last are more and more in use in the field of modern medicine, and notably so in the case of mental and nervous maladies in which recourse to the specialist is often necessary.

Medical diagnosis, like that of the exorcist, involves a prudential judgment. Now a prudential judgment, no matter in what domain, demands a speculative examination proportioned to the

gravity of the case. That is a principle of moral theology, and also of simple good sense.

Now cases of apparent possession should unquestionably be placed on the same level as the most difficult cases of the therapeutic treatment of mental maladies, cases in which the general practitioner will realise his own incompetence and make way for the specialist.

But the exorcist, unlike the general practitioner, will not simply abandon the patient to the specialist. He knows that scientific examination by the psychiatrist or neurologist, however necessary it may be, does not suffice. These specialists, attentive as they are to all indications of the malady that concern their own field of knowledge, will be very apt to neglect all those that are foreign to it. The exorcist must therefore complete the psychiatric or neurological examination with another, not of course to check the medical value of the first, but to find out whether the resulting diagnosis covers all the facts, whether it wholly solves the problem presented or does so only partially. There is no question of superposing a preternatural explanation on top of the natural one; it goes without saying that the principle of economy remains in full force. The exorcist will simply be careful to see that none of the manifestations presented in the patient's behaviour is left unaccounted for.

This critical examination by the exorcist should be carried out just as strictly and objectively as that of the doctor. How else could he pretend to find the latter insufficient or incomplete?

If the exorcist is to bring his examination to a successful issue, he will need a special scientific competence which neither his theological training nor the practice of this ministry can give him. In particular, he will have to be careful to avoid any false application of his theological science. Being habituated to theological reasoning, he will tend to explain the facts by remote, universal, abstract or unobservable causes; his diagnoses will take on a moral complexion; when he has no reason to doubt the moral character of the witness he will be too ready to take his word for it that he has no wish to deceive. Something else is wanted here; and first of all the facts, not taken for granted but established with historical accuracy. For that he will need not merely a critical examination of the witness, but an objective criticism of his testimony itself. After that he will have to eliminate every

concrete, immediate, or observable natural cause of the manifestations presumed to be diabolic.

He ought also to disregard the judgments, which never fail to make an impression, of the patient's entourage. Père de Tonquédec cites the case of a young man unanimously pronounced by the clergy of his parish to be possessed, when in fact he was simply ill. And let us not forget that if a doctor is qualified to diagnose an illness, he is in no way competent to testify to a possession. Benedict XIV remarks that "*Multi dicuntur obsessi, qui revera obsessi non sunt, quia Medici ipsi nonnullos dicunt obsessos qui obsessi non sunt*". And he cites Valletius, who observes in his turn that "*Plurimi eorum qui daemonis opinione ad Exorcistas deferuntur, daemonum non habere*" (chap. 29).

To carry out this examination the exorcist has to be a good observer; he must have eyes to see. Some people are naturally more observant than others; it is a matter of temperament. But ordinary, cursory, empirical observation is one thing, and scientific observation is another. The first takes place at random, without method; significant details are often overlooked, and a mass of others retained which are wholly without interest to the scientist. The second, on the contrary, is methodical, strict, and aimed at an explanation of the facts. It calls for the observance of rules, for the use of instruments. It would be well if the exorcist carried it out with a psychiatrist or a neurologist at his side; and then he should note the signs that the latter tends to pass over as not concerned with his speciality. Since, in this matter, history, medicine, neurology, psychology, psychiatry, all converge on the same point and have each their word to say, some competent knowledge of all these subjects will have to be available. Whatever the medical knowledge of the exorcist—and it ought to be extensive—he cannot dispense with specialists without running the risk of mistaking illness for possession.

The fact is that certain symptoms are common to neuroses, particularly to neurasthenia, hysteria, and some forms of epilepsy, and also to genuine possession: for example, dual personality, at least partial, accompanied by vicious manifestations out of keeping with the character of the subject. Other neuroses will lead the patient himself, or his neighbours, to suspect possession. "An emotional person for example, who has been subjected to a threat

of vengeance or a curse, may find himself morally and physically deranged. His social standing suffers from the shock. He loses his position, and then one position after another, because he can no longer fill them efficiently. Henceforth, as it seems to him, misfortune dogs his footsteps. . . . Similarly, the restless neurasthenic dreamer gives himself up to brooding over the dark designs of fate, over the mystery of the world; he feels the attraction, the fascination of these depths, and believes himself able at last to discern in their shadows the hand of a sinister power uplifted against him."¹

Symptoms of this sort invariably make an impression, and the exorcist has to fortify himself against it. In no case are they specific indications of possession. The theologian Thyräus, who before the end of the sixteenth century wrote a treatise dealing *ex professo* with this matter, a treatise cited with approval by Benedict XIV, rejects twelve of the accepted signs of possession as unreliable, in spite of all opinions to the contrary. They are mostly to be found in neuroses. The first—"the avowals of those who are intimately persuaded that they themselves are possessed"—is referable to mental obsession or to hysteria. "The abnormal mental and physical plasticity and malleability of the hysterical subject lays open his mind, attitude, actions, even his very physical organism, to receive the stamp of any dominant idea or vivid image. Let this be the idea of the devil, of his power, of his possible invasion of a human personality, and the subject at once begins to 'ape the devil', just as under other suggestions he might have aped any other personage; and to start behaving like a 'limb of Satan'. A persuasion of this sort is sometimes due to psychasthenia, and is very often communicated to the patient's neighbours. It may even suffice to remove him from his usual haunts to get rid of his devil as well."² "The uncalled-for assumption of gross and savage manners" is similarly and rightly considered by the same author as having no diabolical significance. "The hysterical person who takes himself for an instrument of Satan shows a horror for all religious things, an inclination to evil, to gross speech, licentious attitudes, violent agitation and so on."³ In certain states bordering on epilepsy we occasionally

¹ DE TONQUÉDEC, *Les maladies nerveuses ou mentales et les manifestations diaboliques*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

meet with a need, an itch, to do evil, to plunge into it and wallow in it. "This bad behaviour consists precisely in what is most repugnant to the explicit feelings of the subject: gross blasphemies, revolt against God, insults hurled at priests, at religious persons, senseless brutalities, impurities committed even under the eyes of witnesses, sacrileges carried out with every kind of sadistic refinement."¹ "I have met with young girls," goes on Père de Tonquédec, from whom we quote these details, "who would spit out the sacred Host after having received It, or keep It back in order to profane It in unworthy ways; and people who befouled the crucifix, trod the rosary underfoot, etc."

Thyräus also rightly discards the sign of deep and prolonged sleep. It might perhaps be one of the tricks of the devil, but it might also be a symptom of epilepsy. Similarly, diseases that prove incurable by medical art have nothing in common with possession. In spite of all its recent immense progress, we are too well aware of the limitations of medicine, especially in the field of mental troubles, to have any need to resort to the devil in order to explain the incurability of certain ills. Intestinal pains which give the patient the impression of a physical possession are easy to diagnose: they are due to a delusion similar to that which mental pathology calls zoopathy, or belief in the presence of an animal in the viscera. There is also the case of the imagined incubus, originating in abnormal sensations or hallucinations localised in the genital organs. "In every case that has come to our notice," says P. de Tonquédec, "these pathological causes were amply sufficient to explain the patient's assertions". The same can be said of the other signs that Thyräus rejects. To attribute to a demon the bad habits of certain people who always have the devil on their lips, to take straightaway as possessed all those who renounce God or give themselves over body and soul to the devil, "all those who are nowhere at ease because they believe themselves everywhere molested by spirits, or those who, being tired of life, attempt to put an end to it"—all this would be incredibly naïve. One need not even be ill to get into the habit of dragging the devil into one's talk at every opportunity. As to those who give themselves over to Satan, there is nothing to be gathered from that in favour of possession; it is a sign that conveys nothing

¹ DE TONQUÉDEC, *Les maladies nerveuses ou mentales et les manifestations diaboliques*, p. 47.

unless some preternatural signs be added. The case of 'Rosalie', reported by P. de Tonquédec, in which no truly preternatural sign appeared, can be explained in the most natural manner. "This dramatic piece of stage-craft, this tragedy in which the rôle of the demon was played to such perfection, did not," concludes the author very justly, "surpass the powers of hysteria".

III. "SIGNA AUTEM OBSIDENTIS DAEMONIS SUNT. . . ."

The Roman Ritual indicates three specific signs of possession: "signa autem obsidentis daemonis sunt: ignota lingua loqui pluribus verbis, vel loquentem intelligere; distantia et occulta patefacere; vires supra aetatis seu conditionis naturam ostendere." "Use or understanding of an unknown tongue; knowledge of distant or hidden facts; and exhibitions of physical powers exceeding the age or condition of the subject." The Ritual does not consider the list as exhaustive, but adds: "et alia id genus, quae cum plurima occurrunt, maiora sunt indicia."

Let us consider the three signs enumerated: they are worthy of close attention. The facts revealed by metapsychical science present us with problems that considerably complicate the matter. The modern application of scientific psychical methods to apparently marvellous facts will not allow us to use the criteria of possession so easily now as in days gone by. The scientific world, and not only it but the theological world as well, is more and more inclined to admit today the reality and purely natural character of telepathy. As M. R. Dalbiez very rightly emphasises, this attitude is no longer defended only by advanced authors, it is to be found in the manuals in use in seminaries, as, for example, in the excellent *Cursus philosophiae* by Père Boyer, S.J. This author considers the reality and natural character of telepathy as very probable: "quod satis probabile nobis videtur".¹ It is the same with radaesthesia ("radiesthesia"). Nobody will be tempted to have recourse to the devil to explain discoveries made at a distance by radaesthesia with the help of a divining-rod or pendulum, or even without any instruments at all. We therefore stand in need of a thorough critique of the psychic criterium: "distantia et occulta patefacere".

¹ R. DALBIEZ, *Ét. Carm.* (Oct. 1938), p. 227.

So also, if we are to speak of a "physical criterium: '*vires supra aetatis seu conditionis naturam ostendere*': we shall find the formula very vague. Our forefathers would certainly have considered action at a distance, the displacement of objects without apparent contact, as a fact of the preternatural order, requiring the intervention of spirits. Nowadays we have to be more cautious."¹ Yet have we really enough evidence to make us think, as M. Dalbiez does, that this curious phenomenon is perfectly natural? Without going so far as to consider, with him, that the physical criteria are worth very little, it is certain that this question of the "criteria of possession" needs a little restatement.

Consider, to start with, the criterium of "xenoglossolaly", of speech in an unknown tongue. If it is strictly understood it retains its probative force.

"We should first consider the possibility of a cryptomnesia, a reappearance of buried linguistic recollections. In true xenoglossolaly there is an elaboration, in a tongue unknown to the subject, of an intelligent and unprompted reply to the question put."² Under what conditions is this to be recognised with certainty? According to M. Dalbiez, "if, as is most commonly the case, a member of the audience, or the interrogator himself, knows the language in question, no xenoglossolaly is demonstrable; for we can suppose that he formulates the answer unconsciously and that the subject absorbs it by thought-reading. For the same reason, the fact that the subject understands a command or a question put in a language unknown to him but known to the experimenter, is not proof: he can still have recourse to thought-reading. The sole case of real probative force is that in which the subject propounds, in a language unknown to himself and to the assistants, a series of intelligent and well-adapted answers to be translated later on by an expert. In such a case, all idea of the subject's knowledge of physical or psychical objects at a distance is excluded, since the answers could not have been read in any book or in any mind, for the simple reason that they did not exist. The last-ditch partisans of a natural explanation have a choice here between only two hypotheses. Either one of the subject's ancestors must have spoken the language, and the subject must have inherited this knowledge in his unconscious mind—which appears highly unlikely; or else the subject absorbed the

¹ Op. cit., p. 229.

² Op. cit.

elements of the language from some grammar or from somebody's brain—which appears equally unlikely, the structure of a language being an abstraction.”¹

We readily admit the demonstrative force of this last case cited by M. Dalbiez. But is he not rather too severe in rejecting that in which the interrogator or one of the audience knows the language unknown to the subject? We should hesitate to differ from so eminent a scholar if he had not himself put out his remarks as simple and very incomplete suggestions, laying claim to no finality. We submit for the judgment of readers a few complementary reflections which may throw some light on the problem of the cogency of the criteria of possession.

A critique of these criteria must hold firmly to the principle of economy; that is to say, it must not appeal to a preternatural explanation of any alleged marvel if a natural one would suffice. But the scientific principle is not properly used if it is given a metaphysical sense that it does not bear. We are not entitled to reject the marvellous character of an occurrence in the name of the principle of economy just because there is a metaphysical possibility of a natural explanation. We have to establish that in fact that natural explanation is credible.

In the cases rejected by M. Dalbiez on the ground of the possibility of thought-reading, it seems that we can reason thus. Thought-reading is a rare occurrence and supposes some special gift. If the patient possesses this gift, he has either had it from birth or has acquired it in later life. In either case it should be possible to establish the fact. If he has had it from birth it is unlikely that he has never yet turned it to account. It is therefore almost out of the question—and purely gratuitous—to think that he has it, if he has never made use of it till now. If, on the other hand, he developed it, then his acquaintances could not be ignorant of certain attempts at least, by dint of which he came to have it. If it be established that the patient has never displayed any gift of thought-reading then this gift is not to be relied on to explain his knowledge of foreign languages he has never learnt. If the enquiry remains without decisive result, no conclusion of a scientific character can be drawn. But is it not evident, in that case, that the exorcist could prudently consider himself in the presence of one possessed?

¹ R. DALBIEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

Can we not argue in the same way on the subject of action at a distance, or displacement of objects without apparent contact? Even if one supposes that all human beings emanate a fluid, a certain technique would be needed for its effective use, as indeed is the case with radaesthesia. But such a technique is not to be acquired all at once. We can therefore appeal to this cause only if we can establish its existence. Let us suppose a case of levitation. Even if we grant that a natural explanation is possible, it must still be established that this explanation of the particular case under review is forced upon us. Here is one in which, if the facts are set out with complete accuracy, such an explanation would be impossible. (We do not vouch for the factual authenticity of the story, but if everything took place as reported we should not hesitate to ascribe it to preternatural causes.) It is a case in which the patient was transported to the ceiling at the command of an exorcist, in defiance of all the laws of gravity. But let us leave the missionary who witnessed the occurrence to speak for himself.

Mgr. Waffelaert¹ cites a letter from a missionary on a case of possession at which he was present. "I took it upon myself, during an exorcism, to command the demon, in Latin, to carry (the possessed) to the ceiling of the church, feet first and head downwards. His whole body at once became rigid and, as if all his limbs had lost their power, he was dragged from the middle of the church to a pillar; there, with feet joined and his back against the pillar, and without using his hands, he was carried in the twinkling of an eye to the ceiling, like a weight drawn violently upwards but without apparent means. Suspended from the ceiling, feet up, head downwards. . . . I left him there in the air for more than half an hour, and not having resolution enough to keep him there any longer, and not a little frightened myself at what I saw, I commanded [the spirit] to bring him back to my feet without doing him any hurt. . . . He was returned to me at once, like a bag of dirty linen, unharmed." If this story is true—and an historical criticism will have to settle that—no natural cause could explain it. Even supposing that levitation is naturally possible, no natural explanation will meet this case. Neither the missionary whose command the patient obeyed, nor the patient who obeyed it—the sole possible natural causes—can be invoked

¹ "Possession diabolique", *Dict. apol. de d'Alès*.

here. No man, unless invested with a power surpassing the ordinary powers of human nature, could perform this prodigy. The presence of extraordinary power must not merely be supposed, but taken as proved.

To recognise the hand of the demon in such a case is not to suppose the presence of the preternatural gratuitously. Let us run over our logic, starting from the definite establishment of the facts. If these facts are naturally inexplicable, even by appeal to extraordinary powers (such as telepathy or thought-reading), then, since they must have a cause, we must turn perforce to a preternatural cause. The existence and possible causality of the preternatural is not assumed, but rigorously proved. It is not for the man of science to prove it—or even reject it, since science knows nothing about it—but for the metaphysician and the theologian. The metaphysician knows, in the light of his proper science, that above man there exists a Being, namely God, whose power surpasses all the powers of every created or creatable nature. The theologian, furthermore, thanks to revelation, knows that above man, but below God, there exist purely spiritual creatures, the angels and the devils. They have power over bodies; they have a more penetrating intelligence than ours; not being bound by space they can transport themselves instantaneously from one distant locality to another. The sole limitations on their knowledge are to be found in the knowledge of future free and so unforeseeable events, and in the knowledge of the secrets of the human heart—in so far at least as these are not manifested exteriorly. But being more sagacious than we, they know how to interpret the slightest exterior signs of our thoughts.

In view of the powerlessness of science to give a natural explanation of the facts established, the theologian is therefore entitled to conclude, in the light of theology, that a case of knowledge of the future has God alone for its author; and that a case of knowledge at a distance, of xenoglossolaly, or of levitation, is to be attributed either to an angel or a devil. If the facts already recognised as naturally inexplicable tend to an evil end, the theologian will legitimately conclude to the intervention of the devil. If this critique is strictly applied the three criteria of the Ritual still retain all their force to-day.

We think that M. R. Dalbiez is too severe when he declares that in his eyes the physical criteria, taken as a whole, are weak.

He is right in holding that we have to be more cautious about them today than was the case in the past; but if some of these phenomena, once regarded as preternatural, are now to be taken as natural, that is by no means so with all of them. There will have to be established in each particular case, the existence of an extraordinary natural power.

The psychic phenomena call for a very important remark: all conversations held with the patient must be carefully analysed. If they present the same system of association of ideas and of logico-grammatical habits that he exhibits in his normal state, then the possession must be held suspect. It is difficult to admit with certain theologians that the demon, cramped in his action by the native disposition and habits of his victim—as the cleverest artist depends on his instruments—borrows, as if in spite of himself, the habitual expressions of the possessed, and speaks more easily and willingly the language known to the possessed than that used by the exorcist.¹

In genuine possession the action of the demon doubtless dominates the body, seizes on its organs and uses them as if they were his own, actuates the nervous system and produces movements and gesticulations in the limbs, speaking for example through the patient's mouth—that is precisely the thing that characterises possession—but, as P. de Tonquédec rightly insists, "this corporeal ascendancy presupposes a more or less deeply seated and dense substructure of the corresponding psychological processes. The postures of the possessed are not imposed on him in any mechanical fashion; they proceed from a sub-jacent mental state but one which remains in a way exterior to his own personality".²

We shall have fully achieved our purpose if the preceding pages have sufficiently brought out the difference between the critical attitude of the Church when faced with daemonic marvels, and the naïve attitude of uncivilised tribes—a difference which superficial or ill-disposed minds are bent on ignoring. We know that primitive peoples are fond of appealing to hidden forces, foreign to nature, whenever a surprising event comes along to disconcert their ignorance. This attitude has been supposed to be typical of a pre-logical mentality; but unduly. However questionable in

¹ Cf. MGR. SAUDREAU, *Les faits extraordinaires de la vie spirituelle* (1908), pp. 344-5.

² Op. cit., p. 9.

other ways, it is simply an expression of the natural need of the human mind to seek an explanation for everything: appeal is made, without knowing it, to the principle of causality. But an erroneous application is made of the principle when these people straightaway place the cause beyond nature; not knowing, in their ignorance of the exigencies of science, how to find it within nature itself.

Far from stopping short at the rudimentary procedures of these primitives, the Church has been accustomed on the contrary—and that for centuries—to recommend a most careful criticism of apparently preternatural occurrences. Those who, out of vain prejudice or excessive fear of scepticism, hesitate to apply the resources of science to this matter are nearer to the naïve credulity of ignorant tribes than to the attitude of the Church. The day will come when her high wisdom will be recognised and justice done to it. The serious man of science, unless perchance he happens also to be a rationalist and an *a priori* opponent of the supernatural, will not refuse to do her homage.

F. X. MAQUART

NOTE

IN THE matter of the sign indicated by the Ritual of exorcism “*lingua ignota loqui vel loquente intelligerem*”, we may ask: can this be put down to “thought transmission” when either the exorcist or one of his assistants knows the language employed?

To answer this question we must know what we are talking about; above all, we must know precisely what we mean by “thought-transmission”.

It seems clear, to start with, that there can be no question here of a personal act of thought that is seized on by another. That would be wholly meaningless. Thought is a vital act belonging inalienably to a particular subject. It is not absurd to credit it with certain effects which could make themselves felt outside the thinking mind; but taken in itself it remains private. We can appropriate the results of an action, but we cannot possess ourselves of the action itself.

Most of those, therefore, who talk about thought-transmission conceive it in the following way. A thought, an image, a phrase,

is formed in a mind, and thence it radiates to another mind in which it is reproduced like an echo or a reflection. This second mind has therefore nothing to do with the work of its elaboration: its part is confined to receiving it as it is. It need not even understand the meaning of the message, but may simply repeat it mechanically like a parrot. This, it is considered, is what happens in the case of a person possessed who speaks in a language he does not know, or answers a question put to him in such a language.

Let us leave this last application aside for the moment, since it is precisely the point under discussion. And let us frankly admit that many phenomena qualified as "thought-transmission" conform to this type. Here is an example, taken from a very interesting brochure by M. H. de France: "*Intuition provoquée et Radiesthésie*" (p. 48).

At Martinique a Creole proprietor asked M. de France to prospect a domain where he thought that a treasure was buried. The latter agreed. "Suddenly," he says, "my divining-rod stirred, and I indicated a certain direction with my left arm. The Creole, much disturbed, approached me and said that he had dreamed the whole scene that had just taken place. In his dream he had seen a white man accompanied by several other people. This man, just as I had done myself, had left the group and made some sweeping gestures with his left arm, indicating the same spot. . . . Unfortunately nothing was found! I had been the victim of a transmission of thought. Stories of buried treasure are common in the Antilles, and it was therefore natural that a native should have such a dream. When I had come near his house he had believed that his dream was about to be realised. So strong was his eagerness for this that he had influenced me unconsciously."

Many phenomena called "clairvoyance"—which, however, does not necessarily imply thought-transmission—belong to the same category. What in this case is given to the seer is not an abstract affirmation or negation such as is exchanged in ordinary conversation; it is not a piece of precise information that is intelligible in itself. It is a picture, a fragment or some more or less coherent fragments of a picture, a number of visual or audible images whose meaning remains to be determined, and which the seer interprets afterwards by the use of his natural faculties and

according to his own ideas. Hence the possibility of numberless errors.¹

Transmissions of this species, moreover, are far from being clear and easily explicable phenomena. They remain profoundly mysterious, and it is not our purpose here to venture on any kind of explanation. But we must remark that the receptive subject plays no active part in the matter. He can prepare himself for it, create a void in his mind, put himself into a state of receptivity and so forth; but what he receives comes from elsewhere, and he receives it in a passive fashion.

Now the sign of the presence of the devil indicated by the Ritual is something very different. There is no question here of the automatic transmission of a ready-made answer, all written out in advance in one brain, and reproduced as it stands like an echo, without needing to be understood in another brain. The Ritual uses the word *intelligere*. It speaks of an intelligent conversation between two interlocutors. The conversational use of a language is a whole of conscious and voluntary psychological acts consisting in the combination of a number of vocables to express a determinate thought. Now it is just the same in an exorcism as it is in an ordinary conversation: the answer made by a person questioned to his questioner does not exist in one sole ready-made formula in the mind of the latter. To a given interrogation there is no sole and single answer, but dozens of them, with possible nuances that run out to infinity. One can refuse to answer, one can disallow the question, one can respond by insults, rudenesses, evasions; one can answer haughtily or slyly, indulge in irony or jesting, invoke the remoter principle that governs the matter, and so on endlessly. The Ritual prescribes that we demand to know the name of the possessing spirit; now there are some hundreds of them, and the exorcist cannot divine in advance which one will be employed. He is more likely to be nonplussed by the one that he hears.

If the questions are put in an idiom unknown to the patient, then, whatever the language in which he makes a pertinent reply, but with all the more reason if he replies in the unknown tongue, it will have to be confessed that to explain it by automatic thought-transmission is to go a little too quickly. There is no doubt about

¹ The matter transmitted is chiefly in the sensible order. Is it so exclusively? When, for example, it is a question of somebody's character, of his profession and so on, can it all be given in purely sensible signs? We should not like to say so.

one thing. A conversation is going on between two equally conscious minds who understand what they say themselves and understand each other.¹

(This would be the place to make similar discriminations between different cases of telepathy. Telepathy is not necessarily a kind of "long distance photography" of persons, objects or material scenes. Much more often it is the symbol—not in the least the reproduction—of a reality that is distant in time and space. For example: a dying man lies on his bed undressed; and he appears standing up and fully clothed. Only the expression on his face, a few gestures perhaps or some words, indicate the melancholy character of the event. Now the construction of this symbol is the work of intelligence; it presupposes the lucid activity of a mind. The problem is simply to discover to whom this mind belongs. And we should be very wide of the mark if we tried to explain such a thing by "radiations" like those of wireless telegraphy.)

JOSEPH DE TONQUÉDEC, S.J.

¹ There are usually only one or two quite simple persons assisting at an exorcism, and these know only their mother tongue.

ASPECTS OF POSSESSION

WHEN studied from a purely natural point of view, accounts of possession are found to have many traits in common, though the possessions may occur in different places, at different times, in different civilisations. The possessed in the Gospel seem to differ very little from those observed by missionaries in Africa or Asia, where, according to legend, certain countries—such as Mongolia—are still haunted by demons. The possessed of Antiquity resemble the possessed of modern times, except that, before the coming of Christ, the spirits of the dead fulfilled the role later attributed to the devils. Again, the possessed, admitted as such by the Church, appear to suffer and to behave in many ways like sick people who have a fixed delusion of possession. Such possessions can, however, be distinguished from these delusions by certain characteristics which mark them as preternatural, and by the frequency with which exorcism brings about a cure.

Environment can multiply cases of possession, but it cannot be their sole origin. Interior tendencies, sometimes almost trivial ones, may play a very important part. The observer who traces the complete curve—beginning in scrupulosity and mental unrest, and continuing through the successive stages which end up in full possession—will form the hypothesis that each of us carries a devil within him, but that happily not everyone becomes its prey. The study of this filiation of mental states reveals the diverse actions of the devil on the body and soul of the possessed, which they transform to such a degree that, in extreme cases, one can see in them aspects of the devil himself—or, if one prefers, of the forces of evil whose existence even unbelievers do not deny. The articles published in many papers on Hitler and his doctrine have not hesitated to describe them as demoniacal, even when they are addressing an audience indifferent to all religious dogma.

A certain kinship of disposition before the personality has been invaded by the forces of evil, explains both the resemblances of

the possessed to one other, and the contagious nature of possession. This must not, however, be taken as a proof that possession is a natural phenomenon. The Church holds that sickness does not exclude demoniacal action. In the old manuals of exorcism, she combined with her rites *Remedia Corporalia*: today, her priests see that the possessed receive proper medical attention while they themselves pray for them.

The interior dispositions which pave the way for possession reveal themselves by physical, intellectual and affective signs, which are present in their fullness when the possession is complete.

The physical signs consist, in the first place, of bodily and facial changes. The possessed becomes unrecognisable, so different from his former self that at Loudun both great lords and commoners came to see the nuns whose faces had been changed to that of the devil. If the possession is already long established, the change is completed by the wasting of the frame and the distension of the stomach. The features express anger, hatred, mockery and insult: at the same time, the organic functions are affected by contractions and spasms of the entrails. The complexion alters; there are distressing symptoms of nausea—vomiting, aerophagia, aerocolia; a furred tongue and foul breath. The action of the entrails, which in a normal, healthy body is not noticed, here causes sensations of great pain and anguish, further aggravated by irritations of the skin and of the mucous membrane. The victim explains his anguish by the presence of an animal or a devil which is constantly moving inside his stomach, biting, pinching, burning, torturing him in every possible way. The list of his sufferings is completed by dizziness, headaches and various sensations which seem to have some exterior cause, such as violent pains in the nape of the neck, which the victim imagines to have been occasioned by a blow, and pains in the spine which he attributes to the same cause. To this must be added twitchings, cramps, impressions of swelling, and varying states of tension which the victim interprets as marking the entrance of the devil into his body or the moment of his leaving it.

The voice also changes. It has no longer the same quality, but becomes deep, menacing or sardonic, mocking the most respectable persons, and using, quite against the victim's usual practice, erotic or filthy words. Automatic writing will appear suddenly

in the middle of a page of ordinary writing: sometimes, too, the pen will be snatched away and flung into the middle of the room. At other times, the page is angrily slashed by an unseen hand that tears the paper or splashes it with ink. The automatic writing of the possessed is of a violent character, which distinguishes it from that of mediums.

The possessed imagine that the devil who lives in them has a smaller body than their own. This supposed smallness of the devil's body explains the great tribe of little devils in Gothic cathedrals, and surrounding certain statues of Buddha. Because of his smallness, the devil, always bent on evil, can change his character, so as to become a sort of perverse child or formidable yet alluring animal, thus revealing, in symbolic forms, the affective ambivalence of which we shall treat very shortly.

The reactions of the possessed have one characteristic in common, namely, aggressive impulsiveness which can be replaced by its contrary, inhibition. Insults, menacing gestures, words written by a hand which has lost all control—these symptoms, together with cramps, contortions and convulsive crises, appear suddenly, without the slightest warning. The violent impulses noted above are a sign of the "occupation" of the personality, and the affective character of this new personality is shown by its aggressiveness towards God and men. Such reactions, though they seem to be beyond psychic control, are not unconscious. The possessed person knows that another thinks, speaks and acts through him, and he suffers cruelly as a result. He suffers also from the knowledge of his inhibitions.

One sensation recurs frequently, both in accounts of demoniacal possession and in those of metapsychical experiences. The subjects and the assistants experience a sudden feeling of glacial cold, which often seems to emanate from the walls. At a sabbath, the devil's arrival is signalled by an icy chill and a sensation of freezing physical contact. Cold hands close about the neck of the possessed; a cold wind blows suddenly. Fear, making the flesh creep, and the chill of the extremities, partly explain this sensation of cold; but sometimes it seems inexplicable. It is generally accompanied by sexual frigidity. The witches had this frigidity and this was regarded by the Inquisitors as one of the signs of the devil's presence. Cold and frigidity are accompanied by insensibility to pain: in states of possession, the subjects can be

burned or pinched without complaining, making the least movement or changing colour.

Possession upsets feminine functions, causes false impressions of pregnancy by distending the stomach, and brings about its effects mingled with the symptoms of the *âge critique*. It throws all the instincts into disorder, destroys the appetite or causes bulimia, and at times brings on an overpowering wish for strange or repugnant forms of food.

Different intellectual signs are mentioned in the manuals of exorcism, such as the faculty of reading the thoughts of others, the knowledge of future or far-off events or of languages which the subject had never learnt: acts contrary to the laws of nature—levitation, or instantaneous removals to far-off places—were also recognised marks of possession. These latter manifestations are rare and constitute the preternatural part of possession with which we are not concerned here. We shall confine ourselves to the facts grouped by metaphysicians under the name paranormal knowledge, which may sometimes appear to be preternatural, and at other times to belong unquestionably to the natural order.

This knowledge is limited in the case of mediums. In some cases which are beyond the possibility of fraud, they give dates and proper names which inevitably carry conviction. On the other hand they are often wrong. A state of great tension increases paranormal knowledge, but up to a certain point only. The possessed also have this faculty, but they usually limit themselves to remarks on the character and defects of those present. Such remarks are often very pointed and greatly impress their hearers: in fact, they can lead to the exorcist himself becoming possessed, as happened with Père Surin after he had received numerous paranormal communications from a nun whom he was exorcising.

In the majority of cases, however, the possessed plays the part of a false prophet. He is the instrument of the devil, that is, of a personified *lie*. He is apt to bring to his absurd prophecies the exuberance of an imagination out of touch with all reality.

The affective signs which we are about to study are less evident, less well known and less classic than the physical and intellectual signs. They are at the root of neuroses and psychoses, which Monsignor Catherinet has described as "the chosen soil" of demoniacal possession.

In his *Demonomania*, published in 1814, Esquirol has shown that

possession develops by fits and starts. He tells the story of an unmarried woman of thirty, in love with a man whom her parents would not allow her to marry. She fell into a state of depression during which she decided to take a vow of chastity, but this did not prevent her from having a lover some time later. Seized with remorse, she was obsessed with ideas of damnation which lasted for six years, throughout which time she had to be kept in confinement. She came out again, uncured, and with her intelligence impaired. Shortly after this, she became the dupe of a young man who declared he was Jesus Christ; she succumbed anew and believed herself to be possessed. The devil inhabiting her body prevented her from eating, gnawed at her heart, tore at her entrails. Before very long, she died of tubercular peritonitis.

From this example, we can distinguish two fundamental obsessions of the possessed. There is the obsession of moral solitude to which is joined the obsession of inferiority, frequent with spinsters, with widows, with people who live on the fringe of life, having neither family nor home; with certain religious and nuns ill-adapted to the cloister, which they have entered, not by vocation, as but a result of some previous disappointment. Such morally isolated beings make up a fairly high percentage of the cases of diabolical possession. In fact, obsessions of solitude and inferiority prepare the ground for possession.

Obsessions of guilt determine it. The obsessive idea that one has been guilty of a fault and must suffer for it, can exist altogether apart from any fault known to the intellect. It is the expression of a deep-rooted suffering of the unconscious. In illness or possession, it can be so intense as to invade the whole psychic being. It is the cause of ordinary scruples, of childish fears, of sheer funk, and of a thousand other states which appear to be incidents of ordinary psychological life. The dogma of original sin explains, from the religious point of view, the universality of the feeling of guilt.

It must be observed that this feeling, when it lasts for a long time and is entertained with a certain complacency, can become dangerous. Christ said to the sinner He had absolved: "Go in peace" or "Go and sin no more". He did not make long speeches to show in detail the horror of sin; He was content to lift up the sinner and show him the way of life. We should remember His

teaching. Indeed, when the feeling of guilt becomes an obsession, it paves the way for further falls into the same sins. It may be held, indeed, that the obsession itself becomes part of the temptation by ceaselessly filling the mind with the remembrance of the sin, thus weakening it and draining its resistance.

The obsession of guilt has been described by Père Surin in his "Histoire des diables de Loudun," and in "Science Experimentale" (*Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, Toulouse, 1928). Père Surin, who could not reproach himself with any grave sin, ended by believing that he "had desired over eagerly to exalt himself, and that God by a just judgment had willed to humble him". Unable to endure this obsessive idea and believing himself to be damned, he went through the usual sequence: his guilt-feeling was followed by attempts at self-punishment, and he tried to commit suicide. Even in the periods when he was not possessed, he was in a state very like guilt-obsession, which occasioned crises in which all movement and all thought were either impossible or very difficult. Later, when he was better, these inhibitions became less overwhelming, but he was still unable to give more than a few minutes to the preparation of his sermons. In 1635, the year in which cases of possession in Loudun were most numerous, Surin described his sufferings as "a torment of the spirit". To a certain degree, he recognised that he was suffering from some malady which appeared strange to him. During the crises of possession, he described the cleavage within him in a striking phrase, saying that "his soul became as it were separated". Almost in the same moment he experienced a profound peace, which was immediately succeeded by furious rage. The devil then urged him on to violent words and movements. In his periods of calm, good works no longer gave him their customary joy but aggravated his guilt-obsessions, so that he reproached himself with disobeying God "by leaving the ranks of the damned into which he was born".

Père Surin's impulsions arose from obsessions of contrariety which forced him into actions entirely against his will and his desires; he was led, though protesting, to hate Christ, to invent heresies, to approve of Calvin's ideas on the Eucharist.

The signs were present in their fullness a month after Père Surin's arrival at the Ursuline convent of Loudun; throughout that month the Prioress, whom he was exorcising, had revealed

to him more than two hundred times "very secret things, hidden in his mind or on his person".

This Prioress, Soeur Jeanne des Anges, analysed her own guilt-obsessions with considerable perceptiveness. She was "nearly always suffering from remorse of conscience, and with good reason. . . . The devil acted in me only in proportion as I allowed him entry. . . . They took possession of all my exterior and interior faculties to do their will with them, not because I believe myself guilty of blasphemy and other disorders into which the devils often cast me, but because in the beginning I listened to their suggestions". In her crises, Soeur Jeanne des Anges insulted God and blasphemed His goodness and love, expressed her hatred of the religious life, tore and chewed her veil, and spat out the Host into the priest's face.

She sometimes found it possible to resist, and then she did not allow herself to blaspheme or to commit sacrilege, even though the thought of doing so came to her. She even admitted to a certain pleasure, astonishing in a nun, in submitting to possession. "The devil often tricked me by a little feeling of pleasure that I had in the disturbances and other extraordinary things he occasioned in my heart."

Père Surin and Soeur Jeanne des Anges represent types of possession which apparently differ, but which are found to have the same origin in guilt-obsessions, split personality, spirit of contrariety and affective ambivalence. They are an exact parallel, as we have said, to modern cases of possession, but they had a greater gift of self-analysis; they had, if one may say so, the time to give to it. The more methodical and more restrained practice of exorcism today limits suggestion and prevents the development of those mental states, highly coloured and full of detail, which abounded up to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Again, exorcisms are no longer performed in public, and this eliminates the element of mass-suggestion traceable in former exorcisms.

Pride, the sin of the devil, plays only a secondary part in cases of possession, as when, for example, it serves to justify guilt-obsessions. It was so used by Père Surin when he believed himself to be damned, as St. Teresa and certain other saints had done before him.

We have now considered the signs of the states of possession—

signs physical, intellectual and affective, with special emphasis on guilt-obsessions. Perhaps it is possible to deduce from these signs a knowledge of certain aspects of the devil.

The countenance of the devil, as it is represented by the sculptors of the Gothic cathedrals and by the artists of the Far East, can be seen during crises in the faces of the possessed, who also reproduce with varying degrees of skill and richness of imagination the gestures and conduct of their model. But the physical aspect, even if the resemblance is a very close one, remains secondary.

In the moral sphere, the aspects of the devil are more closely fitted to the individual characters of the possessed. The subtle tempter, who multiplies his wiles and varies his dialectic to seduce a Faust, is as different from the devil who tempts the possessed as is the pride-intoxicated Lucifer who led his legions against God. The devils of the possessed are more ordinary and common-place. They are, so to speak, the devil-in-the-street designed for the man-in-the-street.

Thus, these devils do not appear as new guests, but as old guests who have come to be more and more sure of themselves, until they finish up by being masters of the house. They keep the deceit and the pride, the subtlety of insinuation, the malignity and aggressiveness of the classic devil, but they are more intimately mingled with the personality of their host. It often happens that, during impulses of contrariety, they attack objects or persons who, at some time or other, have had their share in the formation of personal complexes. These impulses then appear as attempts to cut free from the conflicts which arise from these complexes. The insults to God, to the Church and to the Host thus take on an especial meaning. The possessed attack them as obstacles which have opposed some of their desires.

The history of Soeur Jeanne des Anges proves the reality of the psycho-analytic mechanism of her impulses of contrariety. She makes this clear when she speaks of the "little sensation of pleasure" which she felt when she yielded to her aggressiveness. Her demon, we recognise, was that of the Marquis de Sade.

That of Père Surin, on the other hand—Père Surin, who said he was born "damned"—is a perfect example of the guilt-obsession which has no sin as its cause, but is constantly on the lookout for sins with which to justify its existence. The mission of this devil seems to be to witness to the reality of original sin,

which has transmitted the inborn sense of guilt from our first parents down to us.

Let us now turn from the demoniacs of Loudun to the sick of our own day. Another demon, in the form of a little animal, took up his abode in the body of an elderly spinster, and remained there through a certain "consent" on her part, as Soeur Jeanne des Anges put it. He peopled the solitude which obsessed her, answered her questions, conversed with her; then after a certain time tormented her so much that she had recourse to a priest, who, in turn, sent her to a doctor.

Another devil installed himself in a girl who was honest and decent to the point of scrupulosity, and obsessed her with images of thefts which she had never committed. He recognised the chastity of his hostess and used these theft-images as symbolic equivalents of the erotic thoughts which he knew she would not entertain.

These humanised devils belong to every age and every country. They came with the first man and will leave with the last. Notwithstanding their lack of dignity, and because they are so well adapted to our condition, they represent the most dangerous forms of the forces of evil, the forms which haunt the precincts of the common day.

JEAN VINCHON

THE DEVIL AND THE CONVERSION OF THE PAGAN

MISSIONARIES who have spent much time in the mission-fields often revert to the fact that in pagan surroundings the power of evil spirits is much more in evidence than it is in Christian lands. Paul Verdun, in the two volumes of *Le Diable dans les missions*,¹ has collected a number of missionary accounts, dating largely from the second half of the nineteenth century, and showing the extent of diabolic influence in the mission-field. These accounts are drawn, for the most part, from popular missionary reviews. They are written in an easy style and sprinkled with pious reflections. Their chief defect lies in the lack of any careful choice and critical discussion of particular cases. Verdun bases himself in general on the authenticity of the missionary witness, but shows a certain credulity in too easily attributing any occult and extraordinary phenomena to supernatural intervention.

However, it is evident enough that the spread of divine truth displeases the spirit of darkness. Whenever the pagans want to free themselves from the bonds of their old superstitions, he finds a thousand ways in which to defend his empire. Thus we may consider the question of diabolic influence as particularly significant for the missions whenever it is a case of holding back a catechumen in the darkness of paganism, or of reclaiming a neophyte.

To this category belong also some cases of possession occurring at the opening of the Japanese missions, and cited by Fr. Luis Frois, S.J., in his history of Japan.² These accounts are quite brief. In 1554, at Kutami, "there was a possessed woman whose devil made use of her for troubling those who wanted to be saved. As soon as she saw a crowd collected to hear the word of God, she

¹ Vol. i: xx-346 pp.; vol. ii: 347 pp. (Paris and Lyons, 1893-5).

² FR. LUIS FROIS, an assiduous and careful chronicler of the missions of the Indies and Japan, was in the Indies from 1548 to 1562, and in Japan from 1562 till his death in 1597. In 1593, in Japan, he finished his *Historia do Japão* (1549-78), which remained in manuscript at the Ajuda Library at Lisbon until G. Schurhammer and E. A. Voretzsch published it in 1926 at Leipzig, in a German translation.

made such an uproar and caused such confusion that it seemed that nobody could possibly hear anything. But our Lord gave such graces to the neophytes that, contrariwise, they were all confirmed in the faith, clearly recognising the devil's attempt to interfere with the preaching of our holy faith".¹

The important thing in this case is that the Japanese themselves admitted that the woman was possessed, or believed, at least, in the influence of the devil. In the same year, in the district of Funai, a Japanese woman, aged thirty, said that she wanted to become a Christian. When they tried to teach her to make the sign of the cross she began to tremble violently. Father Baltasar Gago "pronounced the exorcism and told her to utter the names of Jesus and St. Michael; a thing that gave her a great deal of trouble. She finished up by saying, or singing, that if we suppressed Shaka and Amida, their idols, they would have nothing left to worship, that there would be nobody to placate him, and that she would have nothing to adore either. The next day the good Father was able to complete the exorcism and wholly freed the woman".² The two names mentioned by the woman are those of Buddha, to whom they pay divine honours. All this shows how paganism resisted and opposed the woman's conversion.

In 1574 a village not far from Matsubara was converted to Christianity, although the people of Matsubara opposed the Christian faith and had formally decided to forbid the preaching of the Gospel. "On the very night on which those of the other village were baptised, the devil entered into a young pagan girl of Matsubara. While engaged in tormenting her he proclaimed through her mouth: 'I have fled to this village because the other has driven me out.' Fearing that the girl's evil guest would seize on all of them in the same way, the people of Matsubara begged the Father to make them Christians so that they might escape him. And so they all became Christians."³ These events—attested by several witnesses—were put down both by the native Christians and by the missionaries to the influence of the evil spirit. In any case, the resistance to the introduction of Christianity is sufficiently evident. Too often, however, owing to the violent forms they took, these attempts of the enemy were successful.

¹ FROIS, *Historia do Japão*, ch. 12, p. 37 ff.

² FROIS, *ibid.*, ch. 12, p. 39.

³ FROIS, *ibid.*, ch. 104, p. 462.

In what now follows, two events that happened in the Angola mission of the seventeenth century will be more carefully studied. They are episodes in the life of the strange and celebrated Queen Nzinga.¹ A daughter of Nbandi Ngola, king of Angola, she was born in 1582. Her brother, Ngola Mbandi, who succeeded his father, was at war with the Portuguese and wanted to enter into negotiations. For that purpose he sent Nzinga to Loanda, where she was baptised in 1622. Her royal brother had fresh conflicts with the Portuguese. The situation had become very strained when he died in 1627; and rumour had it that his sister Nzinga had had him poisoned. But once queen, she continued the war against the Portuguese. She joined the cannibal tribe of the Jagga. For thirty years she kept up a cruel and pitiless struggle. In 1627 she had renounced her Christian faith; and from that moment her principal devotion was to the shades of the Jagga heroes, and particularly to her brother Ngola Mbandi whose bones she kept by her in a silver-lined casket. Following the capture of two Capuchin friars, taken prisoner by her people, and thanks to a crucifix that had fallen into her hands, she conceived the idea of making peace with the Portuguese and becoming a Christian once more. Before the arrival of the Capuchins, Nzinga assembled her spiritual advisers, five sorcerers or singhilli² (G: "scinghili"), who were to say, in the names of five persons deceased, whether the queen could abolish the law of the Jaggas. The sorcerers offered the usual sacrifices, and did all that was necessary to ensure that the shades of the deceased should speak through them. The two Capuchins who tell this story, Fr. Antonio da Gaeta and Fr. Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi da Montecuccolo, had been missionaries at Nzinga's court. Unfortunately, the wording of the two accounts was somewhat retouched before publication. The two missionaries admit that the declarations of

¹ *La meravigliosa conversione . . . della regina Singa . . . descritta con historico stile dal P. F. Francesco Gioia . . . e cavata da una relatione de la mandata dal P. F. Antonio da GAETA . . . Napoli, 1669* (I abbreviate to G). — *Istorica descrizione de' tre regni Congo, Matamba et Angola . . . compilata dal P. Gio Antonio CAVAZZI da Montecuccullo . . . nel presente stile ridotta dal P. Fortunato Alamandini . . .* (Milano, 1690), lib. v, n. 106-lib. vi, n. 1-112 (I abbreviate to C). *Archives Congolaises*, ed. De Jonghe et Simar (Brussels, 1919), especially pp. 47-50: "Relation par Serafino da Cortona" (1656). L. KILGER, "Die Missionen im Kongereich mit seinen Nachbarländern nach den ersten Propagandamaterialien," in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, xx (Munich, 1930), particularly pp. 120-2.

² Save only in the Capuchin accounts relating to Africa, I have nowhere been able to find this special name given to sorcerers, not even in *La Sorcellerie dans les pays de mission* (Semaine de Missiologie, Louvain, 1936), Louvain, 1937.

the singhillis came from evil spirits compelled to speak the truth. In comparing the two texts it will be noted that the old tradition of Gaeta is the purer, while that of Cavazzi, or whoever retouched it, indulges in numerous explanations designed to bring out clearly the diabolic origin of the replies.¹ Gaeta assures us that he knows the answers given by the sorcerer, through Don Callisto Zelote, an eyewitness, and later interpreter of the mission.

First of all the queen asked whether it was good to abandon the law of the Jaggas, since then she would have to part with the coffers of the dead and would no longer be able to offer them sacrifice.

“The devil who pretended to be the soul of Casà then replied [G 225; C 525: Kasa]:

“‘Majesty, we are dead Jaggas, we are spirits; we do not live in these caskets dedicated to us. To keep caskets dedicated to dead Jaggas was a custom we observed while we lived on earth, just as we sacrificed men and animals. If Her Majesty wants to live according to the Christian law and to get rid of our caskets, she can; it lies within her power to do so. And as for me, I do so also, rejecting the caskets she has dedicated to me.’”

In an outburst of anger the sorcerer gave a kick at the casket which lay before him, and continued:

“‘Will then the other Jaggas cease to honour us in the caskets? Certainly not. Her Majesty may do what she will. We shall still have people to honour us all the same.’”²

The queen then asked what the spirits would think if the Christian priests put a stop to the killing of new-born babies in accordance with the law of the Jaggas.

Casange replied (G 225 s.; C 525: Cassange):

“‘Majesty, when I was alive I was naturally a Jagga, being born to that way of life. In any case, I had sons enough, and brought up a good many of them; nevertheless I have never ceased to be a Jagga. Her Majesty can do it, and so much the

¹ Cavazzi would not appear to have made use of Gaeta's book, but to have had recourse to an oral tradition, known at Matamba itself. In any case, his accounts of the two cases of 1655 and 1658 are apparently independent of Gaeta.

² C 525 remarks that the sorcerer collapsed, foaming at the mouth and half dead, after making his declaration.

more as she is queen. From Christian, did she not turn Jagga once more because the whites had robbed her of her kingdom? She can do it, and it will be well; I, for my part, shall not cease to follow the Jagga law on that account.”

The queen called on the three other sorcerers to give their opinion.

Chinda began to speak (G 226):

“I am a Jagga. When I lived in the world I was always wandering in the forests. I never had a house in all my life; nor have I any hankering now after your casket. If you have honoured me up to now, you have done it freely, without any asking from me. Now that she says that she wants to follow another law, let her live as it may be good for her.”

Chinda turned to Calanda (C 525: Calenda) to ask his advice. The latter replied (G 226):

“What you say I also say: but what is the good of so many opinions? We have our king there, Ngola Mbandi, the queen's brother. Let him give his advice, and we will approve it.”

“Then the devil who pretended to be the soul of the dead king, Ngola Mbandi the queen's brother, replied [G 226 s.]:

“I was not a Jagga when I lived in the world; my ancestors lived this life, but only my sister is now a Jagga. So then, speak with her, and as for me I am content with what she proposes to do. The sacrifices she has offered me have never pleased me; and if my singhilli persuaded her to this, it was simply his own invention: I had no part in it. Now, if she wants to abandon the life of the Jaggas she would do well to live according to the old usage of the Dongo, as her ancestors did. And now, here in her presence, all I can tell her is this: that if she accepts the faith of Christ and lives as a Christian, the whites will cease to make war on her, and she will enjoy much peace and tranquillity in her kingdom.”¹

¹ On account of the importance of this declaration, I cite the parallel text of C 525: “Io non professai in alcun tempo la setta de' Jagga, oh mia sorella. Quando risolvessi di abbandonare la Religione de' Cristiani, che ti costringe? A' che dunque, se da te stessa dasti al tuo cuore un consiglio insano, richiedi ora dall' altrui parere ciò che dentro di se sei tenuta risolvere. Così havess' io ripreso i miei primi, e saggi consigli: ma poiche, a costo d'eterni tormenti, io pago miei deliri, almeno ti sia specchio il mio fallire, e da' casi miei (già che non puoi negare un intiera cognitione dello stato in che

The two missionaries expressed their astonishment at the mysterious ways of God: and because it had been possible to make the evil spirits speak the truth. It could certainly be objected to this consultation of the singhillis that Queen Nzinga's strong will had controlled the sorcerers in their state of "trance" and had forced them to declare in favour of what she really wanted in her innermost heart. But sorcerers of this sort are not in the habit of allowing their oracles to be dictated to them. In any case, the witness Don Callisto did not get the impression that the whole thing was a trick of the queen's. And moreover the case of possession that occurred there three years later shows that the consultation of 1655 is not to be lightly dismissed.

When, in the spring of 1656, Fr. Antonio da Gaeta arrived at Queen Nzinga's court, her second conversion became an accomplished fact. She set herself seriously to introduce the Christian way of life into the court and throughout the land of Matamba, and supported the work of the missionaries. She concluded a treaty of peace with the Portuguese. Churches and oratories were built in the royal town of Matamba, and Christian cemeteries were blessed (G 375, C 546). And there, in 1658, occurred a case of possession which had an evident connection with the strange sentence of the singhillis.¹ Fr. Antonio da Gaeta was able to give an account of it as a directly interested eyewitness.

Queen Nzinga had a singhilli brought before Fr. Antonio da Gaeta. She had had the sorcerer arrested and put in chains, and wanted the Capuchin to have him executed, "because he is a devil from hell, who, abetted by evil spirits, causes a great deal of harm" (G 384). The Capuchin goes on to narrate his encounter with the possessed:

"The said singhilli then appeared before me, loaded with chains, with haggard eyes, swollen and disfigured face and foaming mouth, uttering fearful and appalling cries. I recognised *at once* [!] that he was possessed by evil spirits. Ad-

mi ritrovo) impara ad emendarti, oh sorella. Risolviti, O Nzinga sorella. Accetta la pace, che ti presenta il Portoghese invitto, e la possiderai nell'anima tua."

¹In describing this case C shows himself independent of G. Cavazzi, who having been for a long time a missionary at Matamba, must have found a good tradition there. He describes the exterior sequence of events in greater detail. I take the direct utterances of Fr. Gaeta from G, for he must have remembered them better himself—although a few "retouches" from the hand of the "stylist" Gioia are not to be excluded.

dressing myself to the devil I demanded his name, and asked whether he had any associates in the tormenting of this poor body. The devil answered that his name was Ngola Mbandi, and that he was the creator of all things in heaven and earth, the master and lord of the universe." (G 385 ff.).

The spirit who spoke in the possessed thus took the name of Nzinga's brother, the king whose death, according to the common opinion, she had brought about. As long as she had remained pagan she had had his bones carried about with her wherever she went in a silver-lined casket. If this was a genuine case of possession—and the fact could hardly be doubted—it represented the last attempt to turn the queen from the Christian faith and to regain her for ancestor-worship and the customs of the Jaggas.

The Capuchin confronted the possessed and his haughty devil without flinching, and said in a rough tone (G 385):¹

"Ah, liar, ah, proud and audacious deceiver—so you still stick to this madness of wanting to make yourself like God! Have you forgotten that it was just for this that you were cast out of heaven and flung into the depths of the abyss? If God made you out of nothing how dare you usurp His name, and title of Creator? Therefore, wicked spirit, I command you to bow your head to the earth so that I may trample it under foot as you deserve.'"

The bystanders thought that the enraged sorcerer was about to throw himself on the missionary. However, instead, he threw himself down and struck his head on the ground with such force that everybody thought it broken. But this was a mere illusion, for there was no trace of a wound (C 550). The Father placed his foot on the head of the possessed and cried:

"Rebellious spirit, false spirit, vile spirit, where now is your pretended greatness? Where is your lying divinity? Where do you hide your power? Speak, reply, avenge yourself, if you have enough courage for it!'"

The evil spirit in the possessed merely began to complain in a low voice of the violence he had suffered. The Capuchin then

¹ Cf. C 547 ff. I keep to G, although the rhetorical style of Gioia is rather noticeable.

delivered a vigorous oration to the spectators and the queen, pointing out the powerlessness of this famous singhilli and of the evil spirit that spoke in him (C 550, G 385-387). Queen Nzinga was completely upset and shivered with fear. She said to Fr. Antonio: "My Father, I beg you to put an end to his life and rid the world of this hellish plague."¹

But the missionary thought otherwise: "'No, I shall not do that. I would rather he lived so that he may be freed from the devil by the power of the exorcisms of the Church; for then I shall catechise him, instruct him in the faith, and lead him to holy Baptism, hoping thus to save him and gain his soul for Christ," (G 387).

In the meantime evening was come and Fr. Antonio postponed the exorcism to the morrow. He commanded the evil spirit to leave the unhappy man in peace, and then ordered the latter to be taken back to his usual dwelling-place and brought to the church next day.²

Early next morning the queen arrived. The possessed was still in chains. The exorcism began at the altar of the Holy Cross: "Unable to resist the power of the exorcism the spirit cried out, quivered, struggled and broke out in rage. And although I got him to obey my orders several times, he nevertheless declared and said that never would he quit that body, for such was the will of God" (G 387).

The exorcism continued for several hours. Finally the missionary put the direct question to the sorcerer, whether he would be converted to the true God and receive baptism? The man then seemed to become conscious of being possessed, and answered insolently in a high voice: "I know no other God than he whom I have in my breast" (C 550).

He was then made to quit the church.³

"Hardly had he got outside than the devil broke out in fury. The man snatched the chains from the hands of those that held them, tore them to bits, and rushed madly, chains in hand, after

¹ G 387, C 550: "essendo risoluta (la regina) di farlo abbruciar vivo con quel suo demonio in corpo."

² C 550. According to the shorter account in G 387, the episode went on without interruption; we shall do better, however, to follow Cavazzi's tradition.

³ According to C 550, the possessed freed himself from his chains in the church itself, and rushed outside.

all those who fled; wounding many by flinging the iron links against them. The noise brought a number of soldiers and other armed men running up. At this, the possessed took to flight, running **very** fast; and eventually threw himself into a deep hole or pit. The fall left the unhappy man in such a plight that after they had drawn him out he died in about an hour. He gave up his soul to the devil to whom he had sold it, and who had dwelt quietly in his body for so long. The queen gave orders that the body should be burnt at once, and given to the flames in the market place" (G 388).

These two well-authenticated events, the details of which may be found in the life of Queen Nzinga, bear witness to the astonishing influence of the devil. They show all the characteristics of the phenomena produced in the pagan missions. In order to assert himself, the devil generally makes use of the ministers of the cult to be replaced by Christianity. These, in our cases, were the singhillis, that is to say the sorcerers who preside at the worship of the shades of the Jaggas, requiring human sacrifices and pretending also that the venerated shades speak through them. This cult of departed spirits certainly oversteps the limits of an innocent occultism or an experimental spiritism; it is much rather a part of a diabolic religion at enmity with God. The principal role in these manifestations was taken on each occasion by Ngola Mbandi, to whom his sister Nzinga had vowed a special worship and even paid divine honours. It was by his command that in 1655 Nzinga took the astonishing decision to abolish the law of the Jaggas. His was the name that the demoniac of Matamba gave to the "lord and creator" he served. Thus, following Nzinga's conversion, the evil spirit tried twice to draw her attention to him to whom for thirty years she had paid a real worship, after renouncing that Christian faith she had practised for so short a time. Satan, the tempter, did not fail to make his presence felt in the course of the conversion of Angola.

In the history of the new African missions the most extraordinary case of possession to be publicly discussed is that of 1906-7 in South Africa at the station of St. Michael, belonging to the missionaries of Marianhill. Two young black girls, Germaine and Monica Célé, were tormented by the devil. They displayed extraordinary phenomena such as levitation, knowledge of

languages not learnt, and so on. The whole mission was in a turmoil. Many months went by until at last, after repeated exorcisms, the state of these young girls became normal once more. Much has been written on this subject;¹ it has even been doubted whether these were really cases of diabolic possession. W. Wanger, a missionary well-known for his studies on the Zulus, pronounced in favour of possession. But these cases lack the typical missionary stamp as above described. The girls had been Christians from infancy and the diabolic attacks were not directed to reclaim them for paganism.

DOM LAURENT KILGER, O.S.B.

¹ P. Wenzel Schobitz, C.S.S.R.: *Gibt's auch heute noch Teufel? Authentischer Bericht über zwei Teufelsbeschwörungen in wissenschaftlich-kritischer Beleuchtung*, ed. V. St-Josephs Verlag (Reimlingen, 1925), 110 pp. This little work contains some very valuable documents, although it is not scientific in the strict sense of the word.

THE CONFESSIONS OF JEANNE FERY

"In the year of grace, one thousand five hundred and eighty-four, on the tenth day of April, there was presented to Monseigneur the most Illustrious and most Reverend Archbishop of Cambray, Loys de Berlaymont, by Monsieur François Buisseret, Doctor of Laws, Archdeacon of Cambray, and Official of the aforesaid most Illustrious Lord, one Soeur Jeanne Fery, aged twenty years, a native of Solre-sur-Sambre, a professed Religious of the convent of the Black Sisters of the town of Mons in Hainaut, in the aforesaid diocese of Cambray: it having been found that she was proved to be troubled and possessed by evil spirits. To the end that it might please the aforesaid Lord Archbishop to recognise the fact and to advise suitable means for her deliverance."

Thus begins the *Discours¹ admirable et véritable, des chose advenues en la Ville de Mons en Hainaut, à l'endroit d'une Religieuse possessee et depuis délivrée*. This little book, edited and published by the authority of Louis de Berlaymont on the very morrow of the events, is a source of very great value. It is divided into two parts, of which the more interesting for us is the first-hand account written by Jeanne Fery herself a few days after her deliverance. She recounts the origin and the development of the diabolical possession of which she was for many years a victim. This autobiography ends with the beginning of the exorcisms commanded by the Archbishop, which are described in detail, day by day, with the dates, almost in the manner of a diary, by those in charge of them. Under the personal direction of the Archbishop, these exorcisms were carried out by François Buisseret, mentioned

¹ Louvain, Jean Bogart (1586), 139 pp. Another edition is listed with the same date at Douai. Reissued: *Discours admirable et véritable des choses arrivées en la Ville de Mons en Hainaut, à l'endroit d'une Religieuse possédée et depuis délivrée*. Mons, Léopold Varret (1745), small 8vo. 135 pp. As the preface indicates, the presentation has been altered, but not the sense. Also in the *Bibliothèque Infernale* of Bourneville (Paris, about 1880). Bourneville was a pupil of Charcot.

above, who was to become successively Bishop of Namur and Archbishop of Cambrai; by Jean Mainsent, Canon of Saint-Germain at Mons, and by other ecclesiastics. They were assisted by a doctor and by the Religious of the same convent, one of whom, Soeur Barbe Devillers,¹ was appointed Jeanne's permanent guardian, because she had the reputation of being "a wise woman experienced in the ills that can befall a woman". According to a declaration registered by the notary, G. Van Liere, on 7th February 1586, all of these "deposed and certified as true everything contained in the *Discours*, in so far as it concerned and appertained to each of them respectively. As having seen it to be so, and as having assisted thereat in person. . . ."²

To this is added a Latin record of the aldermen and magistrate of Mons, dated 23rd February 1589, confirming the truth of the facts reported in the *Discours*, the witnesses to which they declared worthy of all faith. It is added that Soeur Jeanne Fery, since her deliverance from possession, lives as a good and pious nun. She died in 1620.³

Such is the source of this strange story. We shall merely follow it, first in the account given by the nun herself, and then in the report of the exorcists. A few extracts from the autobiography will be given, so that the reader may have first-hand knowledge of this most interesting confession. In the notes and explanations which make a setting for these extracts, I am not concerned with discussing the reality or the diabolical character of the events related in the *Discours*.⁴ Only by way of conclusion will this article suggest certain difficulties and indicate at least some points on which another explanation is possible.

¹ Barbe Devillers was elected Superioress of the Black Sisters in 1585 on the death of Jeanne Gossart, and held this office until her death in 1620. See L. DEVILLERS, "Notice sur le convent des Soeurs Noires à Mons", Mons (1874), p. 24. Extract from the *Bulletin du Cercle archéologique de Mons*, 3rd series, 6th bull., 1874.

² Reproduced in the *Discours*, after p. 137 (ed. 1586), pp. 133 f. (ed. 1745).

³ Document preserved in the archives of the Sœurs Noires at Mons. I here wish to thank the Reverend Mother Superior who has kindly allowed me to see the archives and to borrow a copy of the 1745 edition. *Nécrologe du convent des Soeurs Noires à Mons*, ed. Devillers in *Notice* . . . , p. 38. Jeanne Fery died on 16th February 1620. The *Nécrologe* notes her death, without any reference to the tragic history with which we are concerned.

⁴ I shall give two references each time, to the Louvain edition of 1586 and to the Mons edition of 1745.

THE SUFFERINGS OF JEANNE FERY

Jeanne Fery was born in 1559 at Solre-sur-Sambre, a village twenty kilometres south-east of Mons. Her childhood seems to have been very unhappy, for her father was a violent man who drank to excess. That, at least, is the picture we have of him in the only anecdote concerning him that has been handed down to us. Jeanne herself, say the exorcists, was "gifted with very quick understanding and a good mind", and they also speak of "her tendency to hear and gladly to treat of great and high matters".¹ She would return again and again to discussing the mystery of the Eucharist, as we shall see later.

The possession started very early. "One day, said the demon, when the father was returning from the tavern at six o'clock in the evening, he met his wife who had come out to seek him with her child in her arms, and being angry with her, he wished that the devil might take the child. In virtue of this, the devil had power to beset and hover about the aforesaid child until she reached the age of four, when he tried to gain her consent to his being accepted and acknowledged as her father." The nun, when in her normal senses, confirmed the account which the devil had made through her mouth, "naming the place and the people present, who nevertheless never heard or saw the devil speaking with her."²

We have no further details of her life, until she was received into the convent of the Black Sisters at Mons, where she had a great-aunt, Jeanne Gossart, who was later to be the Mother Superior. Jeanne Fery herself writes:³

"I know that, by the curse of my father, I was given into the power of the devil, and seduced, at the age of four years, by the suggestion of the devil, who presented himself to me as a handsome young man, asking to be my father: giving me apples and

¹ *Discours*, pp. 33 and 32; pp. 31 and 30.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 30 f. ; pp. 28 ff. In the conversations between the exorcists and the devils, the latter make use of the possessed person as an intermediary through whom they can speak and act. In the case of Jeanne Fery, it is not clear whether or no she was conscious of what was said in the course of these conversations. It would often seem that she was not. When, as we shall see, the devils made use of her limbs to attack the Bishop and other ecclesiastics with blows and kicks, she had no recollection later of what had happened. *Ibid.*, p. 63; p. 60.

³ Jeanne Gossart died three months before the end of the exorcisms on the 17th of August 1585. Barbe Devillers succeeded her. It does not appear that another guardian was given to Jeanne. See the text reproduced below, *ibid.*, p. 90; p. 87.

white bread: with which I was pleased. And since then, I regarded him as my father by reason of the sweet things he brought me, and he spoke to me in the same way until I reached the age of twelve years. And with him was another, who served me, and who when I was a little child, protected me, so that I did not feel the blows that were given to me."

Her education finished at twelve years and she left the convent. She was placed with a dressmaker in the village, doubtless as an apprentice, and it was then that the devils began to extort written agreements from her. These agreements followed hard on each other and each time had the effect of binding her in a still closer manner to other demons.¹

"Being wearied of religion, and following their advice, I wished to retire to my mother's house, thinking thereby to enjoy greater liberty. However, to further my education, I was sent to Mons, to the house of a certain dressmaker. I there had great liberty, but he came to persuade me to change my mode of life, for I had led the life of a child quite long enough: and I was not ignorant of the fact that I had chosen him for my father when I was a little girl, and that it therefore behoved me to obey him in all things: otherwise he would torture me in ways which he showed me: and that each person lived in the manner he taught me, but that they would not confess as much to each other: and that all creatures likewise saw invisible things and that they thus spoke visibly to all. Because I had been so long in religion, and had as yet no knowledge of how those in the world behave, he would give me for my nourishment everything I could desire, if I would consent to do what he proposed. He promised me that I should have as much gold and silver as I wished: and that since I had accepted him as my father, I must of necessity do all he commanded me. And as I would not freely consent, he even used great threats towards me.

"Then he came and asked me if I were content to give him all that he demanded, and I immediately submitted to all that he should ask. Immediately on my giving consent, a multitude [of devils] came about me, and I felt great fear at seeing so many, for I was never used to see but two or three.

"Then one of them made me take ink and paper, on which

¹ *Discours*, pp. 90-4; pp. 87-91.

he made me write that I renounced my Baptism, my Christianity, and all the ceremonies of the Church. This done and signed with my own blood, I promised never to go back on this renunciation, rather to choose all the torments of the martyrs than to do so: or if I did, that I should protest to them that I had done so only under constraint.

“This pact being sealed, the paper was folded very small and I was made to swallow it with an orange which tasted very sweet until I came to the last morsel, and that was so bitter that I scarce knew how to endure it. And since then I have always had a great detestation of the Church, an abhorrence of everything connected with it, so that since then I have sought to flee and to hide myself from her, and have used many insults against her from that time, being inspired in all things by malice and sin.

“The time came when it was said that I was to receive Corpus Domini, and the devils, having It in great detestation, came to me and tormented me and threatened me yet more if I did not receive the Sacrament, making me promise that, when I had received It, I should use It according to their bidding. And since I belonged entirely to them, they made me consent to deliver my tongue into the power of one of them, so that I should say to the priest only such things as seemed good to them, so that my confessions were always made according to their will.

“The day came when I was to approach the Holy Table, and I declared to them that all I was about to do was mere feigning, and that I was merely following the customs of those with whom I lived: moreover, they filled me with a great disgust for the sacred Host, and made me, in its despite, eat many sweet things before receiving It, even during the Mass itself. When I had come before the altar and taken the Host on my tongue, I went immediately to one side and took It out of my mouth, for they were causing my throat great anguish and suffering, and I put It into my handkerchief. Having returned to my house, I took a piece of very fine white linen and placed It therein: but this was not according to their bidding, for they commanded me to take It to a profane place and there beat It. When I had put It in the linen, the Host was miraculously carried behind me.

“And when I considered the reverence with which I saw others regard the Sacrament, I marvelled, and I asked them

what it could be, and what folly it was to adore so small a thing. But they could not answer me, and I continually questioned the lady in whose house I dwelt, desiring to have fuller knowledge on the matter, for I had seen that of Its own self It was transported behind me.

"Secing that against their wishes I desired such a thing, being angry with me and blaspheming against the sacred Host, they made me, some time later, write another pact by which I undertook to renounce this evil Communion of the Christians and this false God, the crucified criminal whom Christians adored; to renounce also the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, so that as often as I should see the Host lifted for my adoration at the altar, I should secretly spit in His face, blaspheming and glaring with hate at the Host, to show Him that, in despite of all Christians, I would so insult Him; and I promised thenceforth to adore their gods, and to observe all their ceremonies as they themselves should wish."

This resolution having been signed in her blood, they "cast it into [her] own body". They also made her draw up another which "they preserved outside her body".

When, to conform with local custom, she received Holy Communion, the devils tormented her violently, "because they could not endure the burden of the sacred Host". She made an agreement with them that they should all depart from her on her days of Communion.

They tormented her in the same way when she went to church. "It seemed to me," she says, "that I was dragging great weights of iron behind me. . . . To avoid their pain and torment, I would go off whenever I could to walk about as the fancy took me."¹

When she reached the age of fourteen she entered religion with the same Black Sisters of Mons, and there began her noviciate. This did not prevent the state of possession from developing still further, nor the demands of the devils from becoming even more tyrannical.²

"Now that I had made progress, having—as they told me—sufficient intelligence for the accomplishment of their designs in me, and having pledged myself against the Church as though

¹ *Discours*, pp. 94–6; pp. 91–3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 96; p. 93.

I had never been part of her, even now that I had entered into religion—they [the devils] made me promise that all I did therein, I should do only on their counsel. And they made me enter into an obligation, by which I gave them all power and authority over my soul and my body, giving my soul and my body entirely into their power, promising that I should allow myself to be governed in all things by them, that, for my soul, I gave it to them for ever, placing it in their care. These are the first bonds by which these evil ones bind these poor souls and by which they completely change their nature, so that they are thenceforth absorbed, bound and ruled in all things by the devils, and are unable to do any good works, but must live like brutes, with no knowledge of God and with as little regard as possible to the religious life.”

They allowed her, however, to act and to work “modestly, like the others”. All their diabolical activities remained hidden, and, as there was nothing to cause anyone the least suspicion, the novice, who was then about sixteen years old, was allowed to take her vows. This provoked a new and very urgent intervention of the devils.

“Being near to my profession, and while I was being taught and instructed in all good works, and that my will should be submissive in all things to the will of another, the night came when I was to take my vows of religion: the devils then forced me to make, in the presence of more than a thousand evil spirits, yet another declaration, by which I protested that the vows I was to take in public were mere pretence, and that instead of vowing obedience to God and to my Bishop, and so with the other vows, and in despite of God, I there and then gave them power and authority to hold these vows in their keeping. In assurance of which, I gave them my profession card inscribed with all the promises that we make.

“Sometimes thereafter when I was in the midst of my companions, who lived according to the law of God, some good thoughts came to me: but the demons could not endure this, and insulted me in many spiteful ways, and forced me to give them my heart, renouncing all good inspirations and good reading which I might have heard and retained and thought upon. And they forced me to bind myself by another obligation, written in my

own hand and placed above my heart, that they might have power to govern it according to their will; and they made me promise to gain all those whom I could to belief in their false doctrines, renouncing the Catholic faith: and they made me renounce, in their assembled presence, the Pope and the wicked Archbishop, to whom I had promised my vows."

She was now a nun, at least outwardly.¹ But the diabolical possessions did not stop for that. She was forced to give a demon, named Namon, the written act of her profession, and new pacts—the exorcists reckoned eighteen in all—bound her still more closely to the invading devils. One demon in particular, whose name was Traitor, made her his prey. He used terror and seduction towards her in turns, demanding that she should attach herself to him and to three others, to each in a special way. In return, he promised to give her a gift of knowledge which would make her superior to all with whom she conversed. This promise decided her.²

"Being curious to have this knowledge, which he said was a great gift, I gave my consent. The first payment I had to make was that he asked me for my memory: the second, to the second devil, my understanding, and the third my will. When I had made these pacts with them, they entered my body, each going to his proper place. Then I had all my senses in bondage, and I ceased to be creature and became wholly devil, to such a degree that I could not use my senses nor any part of my body, except in the manner they permitted."

"The wicked Traitor," not content with this pact, forced her to write another, worded as he wished and written in her blood, by which she gave him as much power over her as was possessed by all the other demons together, and the right to kill her if she should retract it, and to do as he wished with her soul.

In return, Traitor brought to her "yet another devil, called Magical Art, who took the form of a very beautiful instrument

¹ *Discours*, pp. 97 f.; pp. 94 f. The exorcists and bishop do not seem to have questioned the validity of these vows, from which she had thus withdrawn her consent beforehand. When the writ of her profession had been returned by the demon Namon, to whom she had given it, the archbishop made her repeat and ratify her vows. *Ibid.*, p. 9; p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 99; pp. 66 f.



Pl. 11. The Palace of Dreams. On the right a corniced door, surmounted by a bull, opens on those dreams which will come true. On the left, an ivory door, surmounted by an elephant, opens on false dreams. Top left, Diana or the Moon; top right, an image of Night, holding in her arms two sleeping children, who represent Sleep and Death. In the niche between the doors, surmounted by two figures sleeping under the wings of a bat, stands the youthful god of sleep, with great wings, a bunch of poppies in one hand and his sleep-inducing wand in the other. (Cf. *Odyssey*, Bk. xix.) From the *Tableaux du Temple et des Muses* of Michel de Marolles, Abbé de Villeloin, Paris, 1655, p. 459.



Pl. 12. The Infernal Proteus. This is the diabolical anti-trinity of the Apocalypse; the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. Like the Baphomet of the Templars, this personage is androgynous and symbolises pure and supreme animality—vital force deliberately cut off from the spiritual, and belonging to both sexes. Top left, a sorcerer is seen on his way to the Sabbath; he is flying over the Brocken in the Harz Mountains. Top right, an elemental is born from a torch brandished by a phantom. On the left a damned soul rises from a rent in the ground. The trinity emerges from the lake of fire mentioned in the Apocalypse. For occultism, Satan is the great, universal magnetic agent, the invisible creative Fire. (Frontispiece of *Der höllische Proteus oder tausendkünstige Versteller* by Erasmus Franciscus, Nuremberg, 1695.)

which, when I held it in my hands, caused me to see and know all that I could desire, and transported me, by day or by night, to wherever I wished to be". But there was no question of the sabbath. Still other demons besieged and surrounded her; and their names were Heresy, Turks, Pagans, Saracens, Blasphemers. They all joined in forcing her to deny the Cross.¹

"The wicked Heresy, in the presence of Traitor and of the other wicked devils assembled in a room, proposed this question to me: How could I carry on me a piece of the holy Cross? For their part, they could not endure it, and they forced me into a promise to renounce not only the Cross, but also the evil God who allowed Himself to be nailed to it: making me also renounce the Blood which had been shed on it: and I had to renounce with great oaths the redemption which Christians had received from that Cross, not wishing to hold in any way that my salvation came from it, but from all the devils: making me also renounce my creation, denying it to be from God and acknowledging that it was from all the devils and that they would conserve and guard me in all things: making me renounce also the twelve articles of the Faith, all the Sacraments of holy Church and all the fasts that she has commanded, promising to live in accordance with their teaching.

"The pact having been made and signed, they placed it within my body, with great joy and exaltation that they had gained such a victory, and that I had consented so easily to their wishes. They gave me sumptuous banquets and promised that they would die rather than abandon me. In the same way I, too, was content to endure all kinds of torments rather than withdraw from their company. And since then I have indeed experienced the awful suffering which I had to endure in order that I might be delivered out of their power. And taking from me the piece of the holy Cross, with great blasphemy and detestation, they made me trample it under foot, and offer many other insults to it."

The possessed nun was then deemed worthy of ceremonies parodying the Sacraments which she had received. Use was made of the magic oils, of which we find frequent mention in witchcraft, but with a different objective. They were used ordinarily

¹ *Discours*, pp. 99-101; pp. 96-8. Text reproduced, pp. 102 ff.; p. 98 ff.

to obtain a voyage through the air: in this case they gave the devils one more means of subjugating their victim.¹

“When I made them many promises and spent many days with them, they began to reproach me for not having yet asked a favour of them, and they made me ask for baptism according to their kind and manner, that I might see that I belonged to them, not merely in words but in very deed. They made me take off my clothes and they anointed all the members of my body with an oil that seemed most excellent to me. There were many other ceremonies which they made me perform, changing into all kinds of clothes and chanting their evil rhymes and diabolical words with them. They made me renounce also the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the holy Oil which I had received on the brow, and the holy Cross with which I was signed, telling me that they had no power to confirm me according to their rites, if I did not first renounce all the graces which I had received in the Church. When I had received their baptism, I was forced to shape my life and conduct according to their wishes; and they made me adore many of their false gods. It often seemed to me that, through the devil called Art, they prepared tables and images of all kinds, and led their gods, with great show of reverence accompanied by evil chant, to the highest place of all: but their chant was then very sweet to my ears, so that at no time did I chant or say my prayers save at their instigation. When they had installed their false gods in the place of honour, they made me climb to the first step: and being there, I promised them, with great noise and cries, my faith, my soul and my life: assuring them that I would adore only such gods as they should show me. When I had said this, they embraced me with great joy, praising me and saying that no other creature had ever been bound to them with so many bonds as I. They often showed me the great joy they would have when they carried me from this life to the next, which I awaited with them with great eagerness and joy, for I did not expect it as it is, and as I have come to know it since. They were filled with a great detestation of the images of the saints, and when they found that I was saying my ordinary prayers, in some place where there were such images, they always

¹ *Discours*, pp. 103-6; pp. 100-3.

caused me to suffer sorrow and torment. I had to become so subject to them, observing all that they would have me do, that when I transgressed their commands, they made me confess in detail to the evil Heresy, everything I had neglected to do, and they punished me so cruelly that I received some grievous pain and affliction for each one of my failings. And they forced me to perform daily such ceremonies and many others, and when I could not do them during the day, I had to perform them all through the night. When the Church commanded a fast, they brought and constrained me to eat flesh meat, in order utterly to annihilate and break with the Christian custom, and so much did they constrain me, that out of wickedness they made me eat of evil beasts, flinging meat into my body when I resisted their command. At the great solemnities of the year, however, when all Christians rejoice, they commanded a fast and other observances which were just the opposite of ours. I was so greatly in their power that sometimes, when I had not observed their fast, they caused me to feel such great hunger that it raged within me: for when I ate, they caused the meat to be taken out of my body, until their will was placated."

In spite of these numerous pacts and bonds, she remained in religion, and, externally, faithful to her vows. No reproach was made; no word gave the slightest hint of any amorous adventure; nothing of what was taking place within her was as yet visible to her companions, who had no inkling of her prolonged relations with the demons, or of the invitations which they often gave her.¹

"I gave myself entirely to a devil called True Liberty, who said to me that if I would abandon the religious state, he would make me the richest and the greatest princess in all the earth. But I could never abandon religion, although I desired and consented to it; the devils had no power to remove me, and they promised me that there was no deceit in them. They gave me their word that I should not be sought by any creature, and they sealed this with oaths taken in my presence in the place they held sacred. And they tried for some years to make me leave the convent: but they had not the power to make me. They tried often to make me remove my religious habit, but, without knowing why, I would not consent.

¹ *Discours*, pp. 107 f.; pp. 103 f.

"Nevertheless, Namon, to whom I had given my act of profession, caused me to remove my scapular, which we wear and which is always blessed, because he could not endure it and because it was contrary to the promise which I had made to him, and he made me buy some cloth, and sew it, and wear it without any blessing. I did this, very gladly, because there was then nothing so distasteful to me as my religion, since I loved all the things that they loved."

A devil came and gave her an image, the idol of a god named Ninus, which she copied according to instructions given to her, and which was later delivered to the exorcists and burned. She was also found to have some ancient coins, which were understood to be images of false gods. Jeanne paid homage to them by offering them the dead bodies of little animals.

But a new devil, named Sanguinary, came and desired from her "not a dead sacrifice, but living, and of her own body". By violence and flattery he at length obtained her consent.¹

"Hearing all this, I at length gave way to their will. Immediately, this evil spirit entered into my body, carrying with him a sharp knife, and transported me on to a table. He made me spread some white linen on the table to receive the blood which would fall from my body and to keep it for ever. When this was done, with great cries and pains he cut a piece of flesh from the outside of my body, and having soaked it in my blood, went and offered it in sacrifice to the evil spirit, Belial. He accepted it, and made me continue this painful sacrifice for the three following days, always cutting from a different place and adding pain to pain. He forbade me to speak of it to any creature, and threatened me with the direst torments if I did so.

"And the wicked Sanguinary always kept the linen stained with my blood, in order that they might have a double signature from me. They made me offer this sacrifice many times."

The demon declared later, through her lips, that "these pieces were from the noble parts of the nun's body and that the wounds were mortal ones. . . ." She asked them to "appoint new devils to

¹ *Discours*, pp. 109-11; pp. 106-8.

watch and to heal her wounds, so that she should not bleed to death".¹

The tragic element in this drama increases, for the demons now incited the nun to more and more grievous profanations of the Holy Eucharist. They made her receive their communion, "and that communion consisted of their taking a morsel of some food with a very sweet taste, with elaborate ceremonies". On the days when she received the Eucharist, they forced her "to take It from her mouth, hide It in some secret place, and treat It with disrespect".

We see from all this that the mystery of the Eucharistic presence tormented her. This was the epoch of the great controversies on the Blessed Sacrament between Protestants and Catholics, between Lutherans, Calvinists and other sects. One day when there was a procession, she refused to kneel with her companions to adore the Blessed Sacrament as It was carried past; she went upstairs in order to be alone and "to be able to blaspheme the Sacrament at [her] ease".²

The devils excited her to still worse profanations.³

"They made me take a piece of the holy Cross and a Sacred Host, which I had hidden behind me, and they told me to crucify It again in order to heap greater shame and hatred upon It. And this I did. I took the wood and placed it on a table, high up, and with instruments which they gave me I fixed on it the sacred Host with many insults, saying to Him, that if He were the true God, He would manifest Himself and not allow Himself to be so easily tormented. I know I did this with great cruelty, with great contempt, and with many blasphemies, of which they could not have enough: and I held the good God to be more wicked than the robbers who were crucified with Him. For I could not believe that a God would allow Himself to be nailed to a cross, for I had seen the great reverence with which the devils adored their gods. When I had

¹ *Discours*, p. 27; p. 24.

² *Discours*, p. 115 f.; 111-13. Descending the stairs again, she tells us, she met "another personage" who said to her "that he was not a victim of Christian folly, that he adored the God in the highest, not the God borne in human hands . . . and, talking together for a long time, we found that we held very much the same opinions. . . . I was full of joy to find a person who agreed with me". Did the exorcists ever make any enquiries about this personage? An interview with him might have yielded some results.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 114; p. 110.

done this, they commanded me to throw It into a profane place, and though it seemed to me that I did so, It was on every occasion divinely and honourably conserved and returned."

But she saw among her companions those who believed in the Blessed Eucharist and who acted according to their faith. At length she said to herself, "If I see a sign, I shall be content to adore Him with my other gods". This sign was given to her, through the intervention of the devils themselves.¹

"When I listened to something that was contrary to their will, these devils tormented me grievously, saying that I must follow their advice, since I had bound myself to do whatever they commanded. That if I did so, I would turn all Christians to the adoration of their false gods, and that I should thereby raise myself to be queen of them all. Hearing this, I was at once gladdened, and as I always kept some sacred Hosts, which I profaned in every way, the devils commanded me to take one, in the presence of which I had committed many obscenities against His goodness. I went upstairs, holding the Host in my hand folded in linen. They made me take It out of the linen, saying: You are for ever questioning the power of that little thing; and now, here in our presence, in despite of Him, hating Him, denying Him, and again swearing that you will not allow Him into your body, we command you to take your knife and strike It across: and you will see what little power It has to defend Itself, less power than we have. For there is no one so small among us who will not avenge himself if you strike him. Then, taking my knife with a determined hand, I struck the Host on Its side. As soon as the blow was struck, blood gushed out, and the room was filled with a great light surrounding the sacred Host, which was then divinely carried from that place to the place where the others were. Seeing these great signs and that all the devils, with howls, screams and convulsions, had gone and left me alone, I was struck with amazement and remained as one half-dead. For I had never heard them howl so fearfully, in all the time I was possessed; unless it were on the day when the sacred Hosts were returned by the power of God and of His Church. I began to weep and to consider that

¹ *Discours*, pp. 116, 117 f.; pp. 113-15.

indeed I had been abused and seduced by the devils. And pondering deeply on this great sign, I fell into despair.

"I went aside into another place and again came on these wicked devils, filled with rage, who told me that never before had they endured such torments: and that up to that hour they had deceived and seduced me, and that I had struck the true God in whom they themselves believed; and that my sin was beyond pardon, for I had behaved worse than Judas."

The devils, changing their tactics, kept her henceforth in despair and tempted her to let them end her life. Through fear of being disgraced among men, and perhaps put to death by a court of justice, she listened to their promptings. She gave them her girdle that they might strangle her, but, being unable to do so, they urged her to slit her throat. Each time she attempted to do so an invisible presence stopped her. "There is some wicked woman in the place," they said, "who is guarding her." We learn later on that this was St. Mary Magdalen, whose intervention began thus secretly, and who intensified it until she had won the complete deliverance of the possessed nun. But the devils kept the girdle to strangle her, with her consent, at the earliest opportunity.

Broken, drained of all energy and unable to declare the cause of her obvious ill health, Jeanne was visited by a doctor, who could make nothing of the case and prescribed remedies that were of no avail. After these events, her disturbance of soul may be imagined. She felt a growing desire to know the truth about the Blessed Sacrament, but when she spoke to priests, the devils took care that, in spite of all her efforts, "she did nothing but dispute". She received Holy Communion with fear and trembling, for she had a presentiment that the Sacrament would one day turn to her condemnation.

These fears alternated with displays of arrogance, and ended by arousing the attention and suspicion of the nuns. We may well be astonished that this did not occur long before, for Jeanne was now twenty-five years old and these demoniacal happenings had been taking place for more than ten years in the heart of a religious community, under the vigilant eyes of her superiors and companions. It was not, however, till February or March of 1584 that this strange business was discovered.

It was, then, finally noticed that she was not living according to the standards of a Christian and of a nun. She was allowed to continue in the convent and efforts were made to induce her to make her peace with God. Both her health and, even more, her character deteriorated.¹

“When the last days of Lent came, and Easter was close upon us, I was sent into the Church, where I blasphemed God, and cursed my father, my mother and the hour of my birth, thereby making myself more unhappy than I had ever been before in my life. I thought only of despair, or of drowning myself, if I could find the means and the strength. And all this time, the devils nourished me with all those meats forbidden by the Church, and prevented me from following my Sisters to the table, detaining me in an attic or a room in order to feed me with the food they would provide. The nuns had great sympathy with me when they saw the colour of my face, for I looked more dead than alive—for the devils left my poor body without any human nourishment, giving it only diabolical things. My Sisters spoke soothing words to me, but my answers were so harsh that they could not endure them and decided to leave me alone. And when I considered that I was abused by devils who controlled my whole body, I thought there was nothing in the world that could withdraw me from their power, for I knew that the events that had taken place were very grave. And seeing that, by the grace of God, the Most Reverend Monseigneur once came on a visit to our house, I considered going to him to seek guidance and help. But every time I came into his presence or to the place where he was, (the devils) changed my vision and showed him to me as something terrible and dreadful, for they said to me that Monseigneur would make me suffer torments far worse than anything they had inflicted on me: and that even if I said all I wished to him, they still would not release the hold they had on me, by which they would show that I belonged entirely to them. They told me that I was already plunged in the deepest hell, and they seemed to show me the open mouth of hell and the pains they would inflict on me for every sin. They plunged me into a profound depth of fire, of burning sulphur, of darkness and of stench, and they showed me their

¹ *Discours*, pp. 123-5; pp. 119-21.

great, evil Lucifer and a multitude of other devils, who tormented the poor souls held in captivity: they showed me chariots of burning fire, dragons filled with fire, venomous serpents, of which they made me swallow one, because, on Holy Thursday, I had received Holy Communion and had refused the communion they had presented to me. This serpent tormented me in such an awful manner, that again I consented to join with the devils to escape from my intolerable sufferings, for I was given no rest either by day or by night. In this pit, I heard the poor souls crying and lamenting ceaselessly. That is where I would be now, if God had not had mercy on me, which He did very soon afterwards, through the power which He has given to the Church. Here, then, is my written account of the chains and the tyranny of these evil spirits, who led me into evil, not by phantasies but by their own evil. But I confess that with my own members I have committed sins, and I confess and fully recognise the power of God in His Church, who has saved me from this wicked and cruel captivity in which I have been held all my life."

Jeanne Fery was clearly given particularly indulgent treatment by both the nuns and the ecclesiastical authorities. This can be explained by the influence of her great-aunt, Jeanne Gossart, who was Superioress of the convent at the very time when the secret began to be known. The matter had, however, to be referred to the priests, and the nun was presented to the Archbishop as "found to be troubled and possessed by evil spirits", as we have seen above. As his episcopal town had been in Protestant hands since 1579, the Archbishop had lived in Mons for some years. The Berlaymont family had a residence in Mons, quite close to the convent, and here the Archbishop established himself: it was, therefore, easy for him to examine the case at first hand. By his orders and under his guidance, it was decided to deliver the sufferer by means of exorcisms, in accordance with the usage of the Church. It was also hoped, in this case as in others of the period, to find apologetic arguments in favour of the Catholic Church and of the Christian faith.¹

¹ This preoccupation with apologetics can be seen in the deliberations of the Archbishop with his council, 25th November 1585. *Discours*, p. 88 f.; p. 85. Similar intentions animated the exorcists in parallel cases. See especially Bremond's *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux en France*, vol. v, pp. 184 f.

THE EXORCISMS

Two days after being presented to the Archbishop, on 12th April 1584, Jeanne Fery was submitted to exorcism, and many sessions were held, with interruptions of varying length, until 12th November 1585. The interruptions were caused by renewed diabolical offensives and the relapses of the patient. The exorcisms continued, however, due to the mysterious and frequent intercessions of St. Mary Magdalen, and to the no less direct and frequent interventions of the Archbishop. It is not our intention to follow the minute and precise accounts given by the exorcists themselves. We are concerned only with those elements which help us to a better knowledge of the nun and allow us to penetrate, if that is possible, into the inner nature of these phenomena.

A first fact we must underline is that there is a general harmony between the two *Discours*. The difference of styles is striking, and leaves us in no doubt of the authenticity of Jeanne Fery's autobiography. The exorcists confined themselves to adding some marginal notes to Jeanne's work, in order to supply names and dates which she had neglected to give, or to give coherence to some passages and mark others as important.

We note, however, one divergence in connection with names. In the autobiography, the first two devils are not called by names, while to the exorcists, they give their names as Cornau and Garga. On the other hand, those who are named in the autobiography—Traitor, Heresy, Magic Art and the rest—are nameless in the exorcisms. This does not seem to have been a stumbling-block to the writers of the *Discours*, who were the exorcists themselves.

This remark made, we must now fix the method of critical examination and comparison of the different phases of the exorcisms. The best method is to work from the exterior to the interior, beginning with the things which leave an objective trace and may therefore be considered by the senses, such as the letters snatched by the devils and restored by them, and working gradually towards phenomena of greater secrecy of which the victim only can give us an account—her amnesia, the supernatural interventions of St. Mary Magdalen, her ecstasies. This method will upset the chronological order, but this will not be of much consequence since the whole series of events took place within a year and a half.

One of the first concerns of the exorcists was to recover the written pacts which bound her to the devils. Some of these pacts were in her body, and the others had been taken away and hidden by the devils. In order to obtain the ones within her body, the exorcists placed on the head of the sufferer either a consecrated Host, wrapped in a corporal, or a relic, or a phial of holy oils. This method was successful.¹ We are not told in what manner these papers came out of the nun's body, but what happened in the case of the letter of St. Mary Magdalen and the arquebus ball leads us to believe that they were disgorged by her. The other pacts, which the devils preserved "outside her body", were recovered in places which the exorcist indicated to the devil during the adjurations. This dialogue was carried on through Jeanne, who therefore knew the places that were indicated. In this way, they were able to destroy successively eighteen signed pacts. We cannot but regret that their contents were not made known to us.

The consecrated Hosts were recovered "divinely and honourably". As they approached through the night, the devils cried out through the mouth of Jeanne: "See, they are being brought back! They are already on their way. We feel that they are coming. . . ." and they kept on repeating this for a full half-hour, while they twisted the poor nun's limbs with more than their usual cruelty, so that her face lost all colour and shape and became unrecognisable. It was a terrible thing to witness. All this took place on 5th July 1584 towards nine o'clock at night. Seven Hosts were thus returned, "among them being one which had a knife-gash in its side, and on the gash a stain of blood". Others were recovered on 5th September, and the remainder a few days later.²

Other objects were restored by the devils. The exorcists mention "two antique medals, one of silver and one of copper, which bore the image of some idols which she adored (one of

¹ *Discours*, p. 18; p. 16.

² *Discours*, p. 19 f.; p. 17 f. We must admire the discretion of these exorcists, so different from the exhibitionism frequent in their day. These Hosts were consumed by Mainsent at the Communion of his Mass, the linen which accompanied them was burned, and the ashes, together with the pins used, were thrown into the piscina in the sacristy. But the relic of the True Cross was kept and used "to conquer and to chase other devils out of her". No one suggested edifying the public with another pious sensation of "miraculous" Hosts. Similarly, the exorcisms were never carried out in public, but generally in the nun's room and in the presence of a small group of qualified witnesses.

them was named Ninus)". Jeanne gave a different explanation. This Ninus was a strange image, and the devils made her fashion another image, "which", she said, "has been burned and consumed by the priests".¹ We would like to have found a correspondence of accounts here.

The girdle with which she was to have been strangled² was also returned, together with a mysterious "leaden arquebus ball" which we shall discuss later on.

Other phenomena, also exterior; would seem to attest to the objective reality of possession by an agent more powerful than man and superior to the forces of nature. Among these were the bloody mutilations which the devils inflicted on her, "the cuttings from some noble parts of her body".

The reader will remember that the nun had asked to have "new devils given her, to watch and to heal her wounds, so that she should not bleed to death". When these devils were commanded to leave her, they said that if they were "forced to give up the linen and the pieces (of flesh), and abandon the nun . . . she would most certainly die that very instant".

This threat put the exorcists in a difficult position. After having deliberated with the Archbishop, they agreed "to take up the challenge of the aforesaid evil ones, and assigned eight o'clock in the evening as the hour (20th October 1584). When this hour struck, the aforesaid Mainsent, accompanied by M. Jacques Joly, began the conjurations in the nun's room, while the Lord Archbishop, who was sick, went through the same exorcisms in his room. And he directed that, as a visible sign that they had departed, a pane of glass in the window next to the chimney of the nun's room was to be broken".

The devils were thus "forced . . . to give back the blood-stained linen, in which were wrapped three pieces of flesh, and them they placed in the place designated. . . . And as six o'clock in the morning approached, they departed, and as a sign they broke the pane of glass indicated". But the nun was ill for three weeks or more, "by reason of the injuries which they had inflicted within her body, as much by the old wounds as by new ones they made at their departure . . . casting forth . . . great quantities of blood and pieces of putrid flesh. And some of these wounds

¹ *Discours*, pp. 108 f., and 29; pp. 105 and 27.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 119 f. and 29; pp. 116 f. and 27.

remained with her a year and twenty-three days, causing her continual pain".¹

For a whole year, the patient did not wish to reveal her sufferings. She was forced, however, early in November 1585, "through the vehemence and urgency of these pains . . . to beg . . . Doctor Cospeau and some skilled women to try to alleviate her sufferings by some natural and ordinary means. But when they came to know what the malady was, they said that her illness was mortal and incurable They thought that very soon, even within the space of three or four hours, she would die. However, through the invocation of St. Mary Magdalen (after the patient had passed out of her body, with her urine, twenty pieces of putrid flesh, which gave off a horrible stench), the vehemence of her sufferings was appeased, and she was back in her former state, suffering only her accustomed pains".²

She was completely cured at the last great exorcism which took place on 12th November 1585. "She felt suddenly that the parts of her body (for due to the devils' having cut her, some parts had suffered continual pain, removed and separated one from another, for the space of a year and twenty-three days) were restored to their rightful places and were knit together again, so that instantly she felt herself completely cured."

We may here recall other phenomena which point to diabolical intervention. In May 1584 "she cast out through her mouth and nostrils great quantities of filth and of ordure: knots of hair and small vermin like hairy maggots, the stench of which filled the whole place".

At other times, "the . . . devils filled her with poisonous vermin, whose breath was stinking and putrid". A little later, to contravene the fasts imposed on her by the Archbishop, "the afore-said devils brought before her some raw carrion flesh, and they immediately filled their unfortunate victim's mouth with sour blood and corrupt matter, from which came so terrible a stench that it was impossible to bear it".³ On the night of 9th-10th November

¹ *Discours*, p. 27 f.; p. 25 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73 f.; p. 70. The wounds "to the noble parts" grew worse during the year, and reached a final crisis which lasted three days and which is described as follows: "She was forced to lie in bed, vomiting for three days and continually spitting blood, unable to swallow either liquid or solid food." The case was described by the doctor and the "wise women" as regards this circumstance alone, so that we are not entirely convinced about what went before.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 82; p. 79.

1584, when the devil Cornau, her first possessor, whom she had called her father, was being driven out, "he flung about the room peas of sugar, called Alexandrian aniseed, and he also filled up with them the purse which hung at her girdle".¹ This last fact is not as puzzling as the preceding ones.

Space does not allow us to go into the details of the torments which the patient endured—her agony, spasms, convulsions, struggles for breath, epileptic fits, nightly ravings and attempts at suicide. These attempts, one of which took place in a shallow stream flowing at the bottom of the convent garden, were always thwarted by the opportune—and no doubt, expected—arrival of the Sisters, just in time. On 10th May 1585, when she was being taken back to the convent against the express wish of her holy protectress, she attacked the Archbishop, Mainsent and other ecclesiastics with blows and kicks, delivered with such violence that they thought their lives were in danger. All this struck terror into the assistants and convinced them that some force more than human was at work. At this distance, however, we might perhaps consider it in another light.

One phenomenon—a kind of amnesia and aphasia which reduced the patient to a state of infantilism—made a great impression on the exorcists and strongly confirmed their opinion of the supernatural character of the possessions. Jeanne suffered from these symptoms during a great part of this period, and also later on.

The phenomenon appeared right at the start, though only fitfully. The devils "reduced her for a full day and night to a state of childishness and babbling, unable to recognise any person except the nun who watched over her, and showing horror at everything said to her. . . . Moreover, it rendered her for some time dumb, and she wept continually".²

Matters became still worse when the expulsion of the first devils was begun. They told her that "if they were forced to abandon her she would remain in complete ignorance; for she knew at what age they had taken possession of her, so that all she knew since then was due to them, and they would take it all with them, and she would thus remain knowing nothing". This threat filled her with great fear.

When Cornau, her first possessor, her "father", was to be

¹ *Discours*, pp. 11, 13, 16 and 32; pp. 10, 11, 15 and 30.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14; p. 13.

expelled, these threats were renewed. "Then, weeping and lamenting bitterly, she, threw herself on her knees before Mainsent, crying out: I beg of you to leave me at least this one devil, that I may not fall into imbecility." To console her for the loss of him she called her "father", the Canon promised her that he would be a father to her. "Will you be a father to me? Mainsent said yes, he thus assumed an obligation towards her, giving his hand as a sign of assurance. This obligation having been taken and accepted on both sides, the nun, in good heart, renounced for ever her father Cornau".

From that moment, "the nun was reduced to complete childishness, ignorant of all knowledge both of God and of creatures, and unable to say anything except Père Jean and Belle Marie". (The Canon's name was Jean; Marie was Mary Magdalen.) "A few moments later, the nun said, as she pointed out Mary Magdalen with her finger to those about her, 'Marie, Grand-père'. Then Mainsent, fearing that there was a devil called Grand-père, just as the accursed Cornau had taken the name Père, pressed her to say who was the Grand-père whom she addressed. She answered, Louis. Which Louis? She hesitated, and not knowing him she spoke to the apparition, saying Marie, Marie. Seeing this, Mainsent said to her: Ask Marie. Immediately, as though she had obtained the answer, she said, Louis Archbishop. Then Mainsent understood that the good Lady had given her the Lord Archbishop for her grandfather."¹

She had again to be taught her prayers and the elements of religion. She learned also to read, but not to write, lest she should make use of it to renew her pacts with the devils. The next day she was taken to Mass, and Mary Magdalen at once appeared to her, a fact which the nun made known "by pointing with the finger and saying Belle Marie". But "when the Mass was finished, she said in a loud voice and in perfect Latin, *Maria ergo unxit pedes Jesu* (Mary therefore anointed the feet of Jesus). . . . Back in her room . . . unable to speak, she showed by different signs that she wanted the picture with the image of St. Mary Magdalen on it. When it was given to her, she showed great signs of joy. And she began, as a child would do, to dress it up, and then held it to her breast as though feeding it."

On 15th November 1584 she indicated that she had a great

¹ *Discours*, pp. 23, 33-6; pp. 21, 31-4.

throbbing in her head by "putting her hand to her forehead and saying, Doucq, Doucq." She was taken to the Archbishop, who gave her his blessing, and immediately the pain and the throbbing ceased. She said, "in her childish language, No more doucq, Grand-père". A little later, on 18th November, "The nun, who still spoke very imperfectly, began pointing again and again at her tongue with her finger." Once again, she was brought before the Archbishop, who blessed her. "The aforesaid nun immediately recovered her speech perfectly, and said: Many thanks, Grand-père, you have given me back my speech."¹ Not content with this, she indicated her wish that all her members should be blessed. The Bishop blessed them all in one blessing, and immediately her members were completely restored to her, and she said: "Many thanks, Grand-père, you have given me back my head and my legs", and she could walk with ease. When she was questioned about the events of her past life or about the interventions of St. Mary Magdalen, "she answered wisely and to the point, solving all difficulties that had arisen or that could arise in the future." The same thing happened when she undertook to make a general Confession to the Archbishop.²

The Archbishop and the exorcists saw in all this a manifest proof of the devil's work and of supernatural intervention. This contact with the divine seemed to them more apparent than ever in an event which took place on 25th November when St. Mary Magdalen told her of the decision just taken by the Archbishop and his advisers to set down in writing an account of her deliverance. The Saint then urged her to write her own autobiographical description of these happenings, and thereupon, although she had not yet learnt to write again, she wrote with her own hand the long account of which a summary and extracts have been given above.³

It is now time to devote closer attention to this intervention of St. Mary Magdalen, which we have already noted several times in passing, and which plays an extremely important part in the whole account. The great penitent, according to Jeanne's statements, for we have no other evidence, had taken it on herself to become her defender and counsellor. The devils were the first

¹ *Discours*, pp. 35-7; pp. 32-5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 40-3; pp. 38-42.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88 f., 130 f.; pp. 85 f., 126 f.

to feel her presence, and through the mouth of the nun they denounced her in opprobrious words: "*la bougresse*" prevented them from accomplishing all the malice of their designs. Jeanne had an image of the saint in her room. The first vision with which she was favoured took place on 10th April 1584, at the moment when the Archbishop gave her his blessing. The dispositions of the nun were not then good, and the Saint presented herself to receive, in her place and for her, the episcopal benediction. When pressed to declare by what saint's merits they would be expelled, the demons named Mary Magdalen. It was to her that the nuns and the exorcists turned in every difficulty. She sustained, instructed and encouraged the possessed nun. On 25th August 1584 she spoke to her for the first time,¹ and from then on her interventions became more numerous and more definite in character. The very first time when the saint spoke, she "commanded her . . . to take a pen and write what she would dictate. Jeanne immediately did so", and the saint guided her hand to write it, and to sign it with the sign of the cross, adding that this writing "would be divinely placed on her heart, so as to break all the ties that remained with the demons". According to the exorcists, this did indeed happen, but they knew nothing about the document until the 13th of the following November. She was suffering that day from exceptionally severe palpitations of the heart, and it was decided to plunge her in a bath of Gregorian water, holding her head under water as long as she could bear it. "And when they afterwards allowed her to breathe, with her head out of the water . . . it happened that, as she opened her mouth very wide, a large piece of paper was seen between her tongue and her palate, the contents of which were thus and written thus:

In nomine Domini + nostri Jesu Christi crucifixi.

By the curse of her father, this child was delivered into the power of the devil and seduced by him in her infancy, as I have shown you: but by the power of God, which does not confuse the malice of man with the innocence of the child, and to the end that His glory may be magnified in her, that His praise may be by all things made known, and also the holy guardianship of Mary Magdalen who this day sets free Jeanne Fery

¹ Ibid., pp. 5 f., 24; pp. 4 f., 22.

from the possession of all the devils, and places her today, by God's will, for care and nourishment, in the hands of Loys de Berlaymont, Archbishop of Cambrai, in whatever place he is or will be throughout his life: that she may be set free from those devils which until now have troubled her: and that she may be taught and seriously instructed in the praise of God, of which she is ignorant: and that he may answer for her conscience before God.



How this note, "divinely placed on her heart", passed intact into her mouth, is a problem. Let us leave it, however, to consider the words: "and places her to-day, by God's will, for care and nourishment, in the hands of Loys de Berlaymont, Archbishop of Cambrai, in whatever place he is or will be throughout his life". The least sceptical will be reluctant to admit such a commission as coming from God. This leads us on to examine the role of the Archbishop in the whole affair.

Louis de Berlaymont's lineage was one of the noblest in the Netherlands. Born in 1542, he had been Archbishop of the ancient See of Cambrai since 1570. In the political and religious troubles of the century, his family had played an important part on the side of the lawful prince and for the maintenance of the Catholic religion. When Cambrai fell into Protestant hands, he moved for some years to Mons, where he took a very special interest in the convent of the Black Sisters. Like his mother, Dame Marie de Berlaymont, he wished to be buried in their chapel, Saint-Jean-Décollé. We can still read their epitaphs, recalling their lives and merits. We are not surprised, then, to find his name in the necrology of the convent, with the note: "Great benefactor and good friend".¹

Even before the exorcisms, Jeanne felt drawn towards him. "Seeing that, by the grace of God, the Most Reverend Monseigneur once came on a visit to our house, I considered going to him to seek guidance and help. But every time I came into his presence or to the place where he was, [the devils] changed my

¹ *Nécrologe*, 15th February 1596, p. 26. His monument is still preserved by the Black Sisters of Mons, with an epitaph which can be read in DEVILLERS, p. 36. On Berlaymont, see *Dict. hist. et géogr. eccl.*, vol. viii, p. 507 f. I wish here to thank M. S. Thomas, who is preparing a study of Berlaymont and has given me much valuable information.

vision and showed him to me as something terrible and dreadful", so that she did not dare to speak to him.¹

The Archbishop was a man of benign character. When the possessed nun was presented to him, he greeted her kindly and blessed her, and from then onwards had her deliverance very much at heart. His intervention was often decisive. A remedy often used from the very beginning by the exorcists, and with more success than any other, was the bathing of the Sister in Gregorian water, which the Bishop alone could bless; and it is clear that Jeanne could not have been unaware of this fact. The room in which she lived was also profusely sprinkled with this water. "They had discovered that by the use of the said water, all the bonds which bound the heart were broken."² It was the Archbishop also who, in April or May 1584, presided at the ceremony of abjuration; he himself signed the Creed and made her sign after him.

After this, about 20th May, he retired to his château at Beaurain, leaving the exorcisms in the hands of Mainsent and Joly,³ and it was as a very sick man that he returned in the following October. A few days later, the document of which we have written above was found in Jeanne's mouth.

It was to the Archbishop that Jeanne made her general Confession on 21st November, using an account which she had written beforehand, and of which she clarified any doubtful points. This took a long time, "by reason of the weakness of her brain". The reader will remember that she suffered for some months from a sort of amnesia. Finally "at half-past eleven at night, showing great signs of repentance for her sins, and with copious tears, she received from the Lord Archbishop complete and plenary absolution".⁴

¹ *Discours*, p. 124; p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38; p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 12; pp. 7, 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44; p. 42. This first account is different from that published in the *Discours*; it has not been preserved. It is a written confession drawn up for the Archbishop and the exorcists. Jeanne had composed it before being reduced to a state of blank ignorance by the departure of the first devils. This confession was read in her presence and in presence of the Archbishop, by Canon Mainsent. "Where there was any obscurity in the *Discours*, she explained it very clearly; for at the time of her confession she had a fresh remembrance of all that had happened, and was in possession of her intelligence and her senses, except that by reason of the weakness of her brain she could not keep her attention fixed on the reading for long periods at a time. . . . This meant that the reading had to be done at different hours of the day . . . and also at night," because it was necessary, she said, for everything to be completed on

From that day, in obedience to the directions given in the document, "she was kept in the Archbishop's house, with Soeur Barbe Devillers as her guardian." This prolonged stay of a young nun in the Archbishop's house, though it was "the place ordered by God", could not fail to surprise people, and the writers of the *Discours* felt obliged to justify it.¹ On 5th January of the following year, the Archbishop decided to send her back to the convent, but in order at least partly to fulfil the obligation he had undertaken, he arranged with the Mother Superior to contribute to her keep. But the nun could neither sleep nor eat, and when night came, she suffered great torments, "yet in spite of all her sufferings, she did not cease to cry out: O Mary, you may do it if it pleases you". Mary Magdalen had appeared to her the day before, and this apparition had thrown her into an ecstasy and a swoon. Mary had said to her: "Jeanne, tell your Grand-père [the Archbishop] that he has incurred the anger of God by sending you back here; for what God commands, it is absolutely necessary to do. He cannot be unaware that he was given charge of you, in the document he received. And when you have been in his house for a year, you will be as free as Soeur Barbe". The letter, properly understood, demanded more: "all his life" was how it read.²

We must attentively follow the events of these days. The *Discours* furnishes us with all the details, and they are of very great interest. The nun, though she at first refused to do so, later confided the vision and the words of the saint to Canon Mainsent, who duly reported them to the Archbishop. He "listened to it all with great patience. But as he considered he had satisfied all requirements made in the letter, and not wishing to risk his good name by keeping a nun of twenty-five years of age out of her convent, and lodging her in his house", he thought to acquit himself of his obligation by "sending food to her from his house, and by sending a priest at night to shield her from the devils". This he accordingly did. But, in spite of the presence of the priest, her torments increased to such an extent that she could get no rest.

the same day. It was she who fixed the day and the procedure, saying that she was obeying the directions of St. Mary Magdalen.

¹ *Discours*, pp. 44 f.; pp. 42 f. It was also explained why it was the Archbishop himself who undertook to instruct Jeanne in Christian doctrine. *Ibid.*, pp. 58 f.; p. 55 f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50; pp. 46-9.

The next day, the Archbishop, informed of this, tried a double experiment. He came himself to the convent, saw the nun, and gave her food from his table, of which she ate a little. "Wishing also to discover why she could not sleep, he made her lie down with her clothes on, in presence of [a priest] and of her guardian. But she was immediately seized by such torment, and her whole appearance was so greatly changed by the vehemence of her sufferings . . . that the Lord Archbishop, fearing that she might die suddenly, was forced to lift her up from the bed. This event caused him to have faith in the revelation, and he resolved to lodge her in his house."

But this time, it was the nun herself who raised difficulties, "hoping always that by the intercession of St. Mary Magdalen, she would obtain a reversal of the divine decree". Her resistance continued for two days, until about four o'clock in the afternoon of 8th January. She then went into the Archbishop's room, asked for something to eat, ate it with good appetite and, sitting down on a chair, fell into a profound sleep: "she was taken to her bed in her little room, and slept the whole night".¹

Some time after this, she was unable to eat or drink for eleven days, and she said that she felt something within her body which rejected nourishment and closed the entry to her stomach. The doctor could discover nothing amiss, and the matter was referred to the Archbishop. He suspected some new wile of the devil, put on his stole, pronounced some exorcisms, and made her drink long draughts of Gregorian water. The nun, "with great cries and lamentation, vomited into a silver basin (while the Lord Archbishop kept his consecrated fingers in her mouth) a leaden arquebus ball, called a musket ball, which came out accompanied with blood. And on the instant, the nun was free from the afflictions she had . . . endured".²

By the beginning of May, the Archbishop's fears were realised; he was told that "there was much talk on this side and that, against his good name, because he was keeping that nun so long in his house". He decided, therefore, to place her again in her convent, which he did on 10th May 1585. But while he was in the room of the convent which the nun was about to occupy "the devils entered into her, possessing her with as much violence as

¹ *Discours*, pp. 48-51; pp. 45-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54; p. 51.

had been seen at any time before. They began, using the nun's body, to attack the Lord Archbishop, delivering such violent blows and kicks that he was in danger of losing his life: and all this they accompanied by horrible cries and howling. And all the time she pointed, with her right arm raised threateningly, at the image of St. Mary Magdalen". The same thing happened to Canon Main-sent and other ecclesiastics for whom the Archbishop had sent in haste. The Archbishop then decided to take her back to his house. "When he pronounced this resolution, the devils . . . departed immediately . . . she recovered the use of her senses . . . having no recollection of what had occurred".¹

On 19th August 1585,² when she was in the upper gallery of the Archbishop's house, Jeanne "saw a great light, in the heart of which was Saint Mary Magdalen, who said to her that, when the feast of St. Louis should have passed, she would be allowed to return to her cloister without further vexation, provided she was kept quietly and taught as she had been in the house of her Grand-père, and was nourished with his food, until the day that God had fixed". This was done accordingly, on 26th August, but one condition was neglected. Instead of her being allowed to sleep alone in a quiet room, she was put in the common dormitory with the other nuns. She "was at once attacked and vexed by the evil spirits", without knowing why. On the first of September, about midnight, the saint appeared and revealed to her the cause of her sufferings, saying: "Things which are thought of as trifles are of great weight with God." But the nun kept this secret, "by

¹ *Discours*, pp. 60-3; pp. 58-60. One cannot help thinking that the devil could at times be useful to Jeanne, and that her boldness grew with her growing realisation of the power he gave her. It is indeed strange to see the devils taking it on themselves, by their spells, to see that God's will, made known by the "méchante bougresse", St. Mary Magdalen, was duly done. What happened at Sainte Baume was even more remarkable: there, a devil preached long sermons on the eternal truths, to convert Madeleine Demandoulx. See FRANÇOIS DOMPTIUS, O.P., *Histoire admirable de la possession et conversion d'une pénitente* . . . (Paris, 1613); and JEAN LORÉDAN, *Un grand procès de sorcellerie au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, Perrin, 1912).

² Notice the date—two days after the Mother Superior's death. Soeur Barbe Devillers, Jeanne's guardian, was soon to succeed her. This would necessitate her leaving the Archbishop's house to take over the direction of affairs in the convent. In this vision of 19th August the saint said to Jeanne "that she must inform her Grand-père of something which greatly concerns both the public and the private good of another". What was this "something"? We are not told, for there is a deliberate silence in the text here. Could it have been that the Archbishop was to appoint Barbe Devillers in succession to Jeanne Gossart? In which case, both the possessed nun and her guardian would have to return to the convent. The explanation is tempting, and we can form an idea both of the astute manœuvring of Jeanne and of the influence she had acquired with the Archbishop. *Discours*, pp. 69 f.; pp. 67 f.

reason of the difficulties which she experienced whenever she had to relate the things that had been revealed to her, which were met with incredulity and with great demands for assurances and proofs, from those to whom she spoke of them". She was therefore given over to the fury of the devils. They "began (as it seemed) to tear her whole body slowly with iron hooks. . . . She was in great agony, watching the blood stream profusely from her body", and she turned to God and to Mary Magdalen. Suddenly her sufferings ceased. She sent for Mainsent, who directed that she should have a quiet room. "And by the application of Gregorian water, stemmed the blood, assuaged the pain, and little by little healed the wounds".¹

When the day of her final deliverance came, on 12th November, she took the Archbishop's hand and said: "Today, I am restored and returned to my sisters, that I may live among them as a true nun. As to my food . . . it will be left entirely to your discretion, for you are discharged of the obligation. Nevertheless, you will have charge of my conscience for the rest of my life".²

As we have seen, the interventions of St. Mary Magdalen supported and mysteriously directed those of the Archbishop, and it was the same saint who was the cause of Jeanne's ecstasies. A process of development can be seen in her action. Her patient was at first unaware of the influence being used on her behalf; then the saint came to her in silent apparitions (10th April and 28th June 1584); on 25th August, she spoke and dictated a letter; she spoke again in later apparitions (10th, 12th and 13th November), and on the 12th she caused a prolonged ecstasy. This occurred again on 6th January 1585, when she taught Jeanne, according to the traditional doctrine of the Church, how to distinguish divine apparitions from the false ones of the devil. On 12th November Jeanne experienced a prolonged ecstasy, during the course of which she was informed of the hour of her final combat and of its decisive issue. Another ecstasy took place on 6th January. A critical spirit will notice that on each occasion something happened to reveal the ecstasy and provoke urgent questions. On 10th April 1585, for instance, she burst into tears which rained down on the celebrant's breviary, which was in the place against which she was leaning. . . . "This caused him to ask her why she mourned and

¹ *Discours*, pp. 70 f.; pp. 68 f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 84 f.; pp. 80-2.

wept." On 12th November Mainsent watched her rapt in ecstasy, and saw her repeatedly stretch out her arms and join her hands. He spoke to her and pulled her by the arm, but she made no reply. A little later the nun, still in ecstasy, recited some verses of a psalm, well suited to her present case, and with expressive mimicry. In this connection, we may note that for some months past the Archbishop had had her taught the Psalter under the direction of a priest.¹

The ecstasy of 6th January 1586, in the convent chapel, remained hidden from those assisting at Mass, until the celebrant, Canon Mainsent, had finished saying Mass and retired to the sacristy. "Then [she] uttered a sad and dolorous cry, which the Canon no sooner heard than he hurried to her." He saw her face transformed, her eyes wide open and fixed on the image of St. Mary Magdalen. Then, still in ecstasy, she bent forward and laughed softly. "But immediately, she returned to her senses, with a great trembling in her whole body and a tremendous beating of the heart." They revived her. "Then she declared that she had never experienced such weakness . . . as on this occasion and on that of the corresponding date exactly a year before. But, nevertheless . . . these two weaknesses could not be compared with that which she experienced on 24th May 1585, when she saw Our Lord Jesus Christ and His glorious Mother."²

This ecstasy of 24th May was sent her through the intercession of her heavenly protectress in a very timely manner. The Archbishop had himself undertaken to instruct her in the Catechism of St. Peter Canisius, and ordinarily he found her perfectly docile. But when he came to the chapter on the Eucharist, he was astonished to meet with an unaccustomed contentiousness, which refused to accept the truth, and which he could not overcome. "At two o'clock in the morning, between sleeping and waking, she was shown a very beautiful vision. . . . She saw a high ladder raised into heaven, on the summit of which she stood: and suddenly there appeared an Angel dressed in white . . . holding in his right hand the sacred Host, and in the other the Chalice, and saying to her: This is the God of the Christians, in whom you must truly believe. . . . And then the sky opened and

¹ *Discours*, pp. 57, 75, 69; pp. 54, 72, 66.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 134 f.; pp. 129 f.

I saw Our Lord Jesus Christ" in successive visions of His glory and of scenes from His Passion. "Finally, the glorious Virgin Mary was revealed surrounded with glorious light. . . ." And during her ecstasy, she spoke "words from a heart filled with peace, love and hope, protesting that she would never again doubt the principal points of doctrine . . . concerning the Sacrament of the Altar". She was so much weakened by this vision that she had to be dissuaded from expressing the joy that she felt. The following day, she was unable to walk. But she never again made any objection to the teaching on the Eucharist, for this wonderful vision had ended them.¹

The scene of the final exorcism is worth lingering over for a moment. Everything had been made ready for it by the nun herself, who succeeded in investing the scene with matchless solemnity and pathos.

In her vision of 12th November, she had received a warning from St. Mary Magdalen. "She spoke to me", Jeanne said to Canon Mainsent, "and directed me to tell you that a great conflict yet remained to me: which, if I shall endure, I shall be this day wholly delivered. However, because it will be so great, I am to be assisted by the prayers of all the nuns, who must commence praying at that hour and continue until an hour determined by God: which hour I know, but I am commanded not to tell them until the hour shall have arrived, and then I shall call them, that they may be present during this conflict". Thus all concerned were kept in suspense, and the thrilling news had time to spread.

She sent Mainsent to report to the Archbishop, and announced that the hour would be three o'clock in the afternoon. The Archbishop summoned several ecclesiastics to be witnesses to the last conflict, and set the Poor Clares to pray for the outcome. The nun herself caused her Sisters to go and pray in the chapel until the decisive moment, when they would be called to her room. This room being very small, it was decided to take Jeanne "into a bigger room, for the number and the better convenience of those who would be present". Acting on advice given her in a revelation, she warned the exorcists "not to address the devils as

¹ *Discours*, pp. 66-8; pp. 63-5. In the *Revelations* of St. Brigit there is also mention of a ladder, to the summit of which a monk climbed to question God on the mysteries of the faith (*Birgittae Revelationes, Liber Quaestionum*). It is to be regretted that we have no record of Jeanne's reading.

though they were in her body, possessing her, but only as being in the air about her, tormenting”.

“When three o’clock in the afternoon came, knowing that this was the hour divinely assigned for her last conflict to begin, she called and had brought into the room all who were to be present. And then St. Mary Magdalen . . . appeared, standing at the foot of her bed, on the right-hand side: where she remained without moving or speaking, as long as the conflict lasted. And the rest of the space was filled with a multitude of devils, filled with rage and fury.”

A conversation began between them and Jeanne; those around heard her answers. Suddenly she cried out: “I am being torn, I am being torn”. The Bishop held the crucifix before her, suggesting acts of confidence and of faith in the merits of Christ, which she repeated. “After this, she lay for some time, gripping the coverlet without speaking, in the manner of those in their agony. . . . Then she turned on her side and was quiet for some time. Thus the conflict ended. Then St. Mary Magdalen . . . came to the nun and said: Praise God, you are delivered. Accordingly, the nun joined her hands and said: God be praised, I am completely cured.”

There followed a dialogue with the official, with the Archbishop, through whom she had attested the reality of the phenomena she had experienced and the documents she had given back. “Some have expressed the opinion that it was nothing but madness. . . . I protest before God and before the whole world, that there was not a member of my body which was not bound and subjected” to the devil. These are the words that had been revealed to her by St. Mary Magdalen.

As those around her stood dumbfounded, Jeanne invited them all to give thanks to God. A *Te Deum* was sung, and the Archbishop put on his stole, chanted the prayers and gave his benediction. “After this, the patient showed to all in the room the innumerable scars and scratches which she had received from the devils . . . and her shift soaked in blood”.

What an apotheosis for a girl of whom it was said that “she was glad to hear and to discuss great and high matters”.

CONCLUSION

Finishing this extraordinary story, the reader will ask himself: How much of it is true? To be precise, two questions arise: the first, as to the reality of the events here related, and the second, as to their diabolical or supernatural character. In so far as it is possible, we shall treat of these two questions separately.

It will be immediately evident that, from a critical viewpoint, the two parts of the book published by Louis de Berlaymont are of very different value. The *Discours* written by the exorcists inspire confidence, at least as to the matter, the exterior form of the facts related. They tell them as they saw them, or as they believed they saw them.

Quite other is the impression left by the autobiography of Jeanne. Its aim is quite evident: she clearly sets out to make people believe in her, and protests against the sceptics, as we have seen her do in her declarations at the final exorcisms. She wrote by invitation of Mary Magdalen and under divine inspiration, as she declared to the Archbishop.¹

It was she herself, moreover, who caused the exorcists to write their work. At the meal which followed the last exorcism, "she described to the whole table the principal things she had done while she was possessed. These were passed from mouth to mouth"—not without risk of the facts becoming distorted. And when, a few days later, Mainsent reproached her with having thus publicly revealed the secrets of her conscience, she answered "that she could safely publish them, since she had received permission to do so on the preceding November 12th, when, in her long ecstasy, Mary Magdalen had spoken with her, even commanding her to give, in her name, a like permission to those in whose spiritual charge she would be". And she went on in the same strain, "led by an ardent zeal for the honour of God, of which no one could deprive her".

This naturally troubled the Bishop and his counsellors, who feared that it would not be long before her accounts became twisted out of recognition, in a manner likely to do harm. On 25th November the Archbishop decided "to prepare and edit a written account, containing the bare truth of the facts: not, however, with the intention of publishing it. . . ." But they were

¹ *Discours*, pp. 87-9; pp. 84-6.

soon in a state of some perplexity, "finding the undertaking very difficult, because they found great difficulty in recalling past events," and especially the pacts written by the nun, which had all been burned.

An hour and a half later, we are told, the saint appeared to Jeanne, "alone in her little room, knowing nothing of what was going on in the Archbishop's house, and said to her: They are in difficulties. . . . Take your pen and write that with which God will inspire you". She set to work immediately, and finished writing on the 29th of the same month. She delivered what she had written to the Archbishop, "declaring that, for her part, she had done her duty, and that it behoved him also to do his".¹

The Archbishop and his counsellors did not doubt the supernatural origin of this piece of writing. The devil, Cornau, had taken all knowledge from her, and she had never re-learned to write. This argument sufficed to convince them. Would it have the same effect on a psychiatrist today? We shall seek for other criteria.

We have already remarked that there is general harmony between the account given by the exorcists and the facts which she herself recounts of her previous life, although there are also some very slight divergences. Gifted, as we are told, "with a very quick understanding and a good mind", she was able to arrange her account in accordance with what had happened in and around her during those tragic weeks. For the exorcists, as for us, the anterior facts were not verifiable, and we cannot rely on her testimony alone.

We must, therefore, trust the honesty of the exorcists' account. But, in spite of their much vaunted determination to reject everything that was not proved and that had not "great certainty and assurances", the exorcists were somewhat lacking in subtlety.² They seem not to have realised that Jeanne was playing her own

¹ As we have seen, the Archbishop and those about him first had in mind a manuscript account only, which could be shown to any "who should desire knowledge concerning these matters". We are not told why they changed their minds and had the *Discours* published. Was it the "supernatural" intervention of Jeanne which decided them?

² These "great assurances" were purely verbal. It sufficed for proof that the possessed nun should repeat the statement, and reinforce it with a crisis of suffering and of blood. After a few experiences of this kind, they no longer doubted. They did not know the art of entangling the visionary and leading her on to contradict herself with a few apparently innocent questions—a method which has been and still is effective.

game with increasing audacity and self-confidence. They were not without sincerity, and it is through them we can perhaps come to understand the character of the facts which she reported and the phenomena she endured—or produced—and which the exorcists reported without themselves entirely understanding them.

We have every reason to believe that the facts which they present happened as they describe them: the statement of Jeanne, her crises, her violence towards the Archbishop, the dialogues which, through her, took place with the devil, that strange amnesia which alternated with sudden returns of her memory and her faculties. In short, during the exorcisms, the events appear to have taken place as they are described.

But is this enough to attest the truth of Jeanne's statements concerning her previous states of possession? It is impossible to think so, unless, like Louis de Berlaymont and his entourage, one is convinced of the diabolical and supernatural character of the phenomena they describe. We shall now tackle this second question, without being over-confident of coming to a satisfactory solution.

What we must try to find is an unambiguous indication of diabolical activity. Jeanne's account of the conduct of the devils breaks no new ground: the end of the sixteenth century, when she lived, was the "golden age" of witchcraft and diabolism; the public mind was soaked in them, and stories very like Jeanne's had long been the theme of discussion throughout the dark winter evenings, or during the hours of recreation in religious houses. She had not far to look, therefore, for material well suited for her purpose. We have already seen that in her case there is no explicit reference to the Witches' Sabbath: she must have been well aware that a reference of this kind would be dangerous, as it came into a category dealt with by the law of the land. In all this we are reminded of the young Vincent de Paul, who, twenty-five years later, was to seize on the stories of Barbary pirates which were going the rounds of the Gulf of Lyons, and make use of them to build up the legendary account of his Tunisian captivity.¹

We really come to the heart of the matter in dealing with the exorcists' account of the exterior facts, of the mysterious movements of objects: the written pacts, the Hosts which the demons

¹ See *La conversion de Saint Vincent de Paul* and *Vincent de Paul a-t-il menti?* (Rev. d'Hist. Ecc. de Louvain, 1936, vol. xxxii, pp. 313 ff.; 1938, vol. xxxiv, pp. 320 ff.)

greeted with cries of terror, the antique medals adored as idols. Can we be certain that the exorcists realised the necessity of taking precautions to assure themselves that these phenomena were not produced by quite ordinary means? Everything occurred, by her own choice, in the evening, when semi-darkness would have favoured sleights-of-hand.

Two or three of the exterior phenomena are better able to withstand a critical examination. I am thinking of that "raw carrion flesh" which the devils "brought to her, in the sight of those present," and with which they filled her mouth, so that the place was heavy with intolerable stench; of those "venomous vermin", of that "great quantity of filth and ordure, hair and little insects in the form of hairy worms", which she discharged from her mouth and nostrils. We may recall, also, that pane of glass, the very one indicated by the Archbishop, which the devil Cornau broke on his expulsion. Could a natural explanation be given for these facts?¹

The interventions of St. Mary Magdalen show a gradual development which begins with her first unseen presence, continues with the supernatural words spoken to Jeanne, and culminates with the ecstasies of which she was the cause. The highlights are the dictation of the letter for the Archbishop and the vision of Christ and His Mother.² But it is hard to avoid the impression that this letter was a trick concocted by an ardent and ambitious girl to gain admittance to the immediate entourage of the Archbishop. She soon saw the difficulties of such a project—hence her ever more violent crises, which caused the kindly Archbishop to act against the dictates of his own good sense.

¹ There are three possible explanations of the broken pane. The first is that the devils did indeed give the sign demanded by the Archbishop; the second, that an accomplice placed outside took care of this part of the scenario. The third possibility is that Jeanne herself did it. Consider the circumstances. The exorcism took place at eight o'clock on the evening of 10th October; the deliverance was quickly obtained and the demons took back to an agreed place—which is not indicated—the blood-stained linen and the pieces of flesh. They remained the whole night, nevertheless, to torment and afflict the nun. It was only a little before six o'clock, before dawn, that they departed and that the pane of glass was broken. Did Jeanne wait till the attention of her assistants had been worn out by a long vigil?

² We have already referred to this vision, the description of which alone is sufficient to inspire distrust. And the complacency with which Jeanne talked of it later (6th January 1586) did nothing to dispel this impression. Were the arguments which the saint gives her to demonstrate the supernatural character of her visions, intended for her or for the exorcists? We have already remarked how she betrays herself whenever an ecstasy occurs. It is indeed very difficult to admit that her visions were supernatural . . . and disinterested.

But this girl, "gifted with a very quick understanding and a good mind", knew when to rein her ambitions. Her saint came to her at a very timely moment to explain the new and modified form of the divine commands. These requirements were at first imposed on him "in whatever place he is or will be"—and this held good for a year. But on the day of her deliverance, Jeanne was content with requiring that he should have care of her conscience as long as he lived. It is not given to many nuns to have an Archbishop for a spiritual director.¹

What are we to conclude? Was it a mystery of diabolical cleverness, or a mystery of feminine psychology? It may well be that it was both at once.²

PIERRE DEBONGNIE C.SS.R.

¹ From all this, the Archbishop gained a new and pleasing name. François Vinchant writes: "The principal devils who possessed her are said to have had names, one Garga, another Cornau: but the Archbishop then had, and even now retains, a name given to him by the common people: the good devil of the Black Sisters." *Annales de la province et comté du Hainaut*, to the year 1584, Mons, vol. v, p. 319.

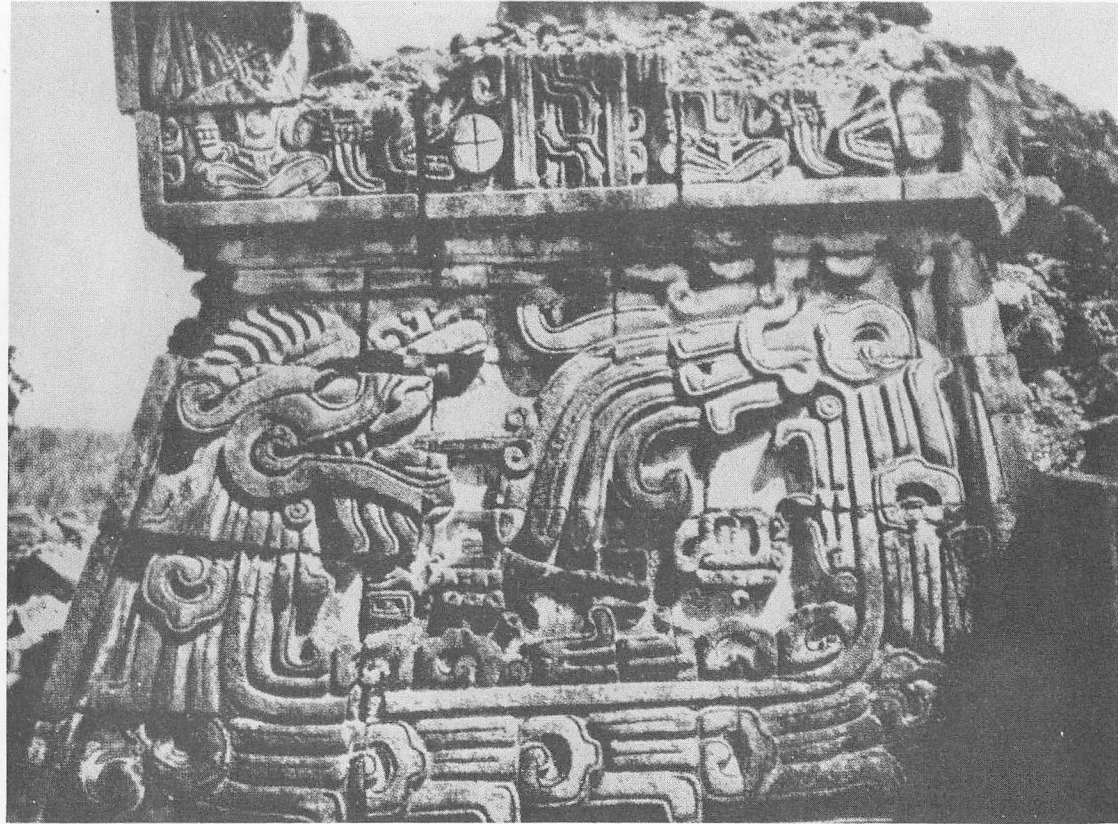
² Is not this the place to quote Harnack? "Possession often defies scientific analysis, even in our day, and leaves one free to think that it brings certain mysterious forces into play. There are facts in this connection which one cannot reject and which equally one cannot explain." *Die Mission und Ausbreitung* . . . 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1), p. 137.

THE CONFESSION OF BOULLAN

JEAN-ANTOINE BOULLAN was born at Saint-Porcaire on 18th February 1824, and died at Lyons on 4th January 1893.¹ This priest, "John the Baptist returned to earth", called himself the heir of the heretic Vintras, "the Prophet Elias reincarnated", "the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church of Carmel". Like Vintras, Boullan claimed to have been sent as the "sword of God" for the exorcising of the Church of Rome.² Prosecuted from 1861 to 1864, he was jailed in the prisons of the Holy Office at the beginning of 1869. The Piedmontese delivered him. Boullan carried from his prison a sheaf of pink paper, about twenty-eight sheets in all, containing his "confession". In this document, he prepared

¹ Dr. Vinchon sends us the following note: "I have in my possession three brochures, written by Joanny Bricaud, a curious person claiming the title of Patriarch of the Universal Gnostic Church. In conjunction with Jules Doinel, known by the name of Valcubin, Bishop of Montségur (Ariège), he proposed to revive the Albigensian heresy. These are the titles of the brochures: (a) *Huysmans et le Satanisme* (Paris, Chacornac, 1913), 500 ex.; (b) *Huysmans occultiste et magicien, avec une note sur les Hosties magiques qui servirent à Huysmans pour combattre les envoûtements* (Paris, Chacornac, 1913) 800 ex.; (c) *L'abbé Boullan* (Paris, Chacornac, 1927). The documents in these brochures mark out the stages in Boullan's life. They were collected by a man who had met him, and who knew his entourage. They deal but little with the proceedings of the ecclesiastical tribunals in 1869. The four stages are as follows: (1) *L'oeuvre de la réparation des âmes*. A community directed by Adèle Chevalier, a *miraculée* of La Salette, later involved in swindling, scatology and eroticism. Boullan and the ex-nun Chevalier were prosecuted both at Rome and by the French tribunals. (2) *Les annales de la Sainteté au XIX^e siècle*, which relate the miracles obtained by methods borrowed from occultism, and which was the cause of Boullan's coming under an interdict and being expelled from the Church, in July 1875. (3) *L'essai de réforme de l'oeuvre de la Miséricorde de Vintras*, which caused his exclusion from that sect in 1877; (4) the formulation of his personal doctrine, in which a collective eroticism reminiscent of Raspoutine, which involved the practice of "mystical marriages" among his followers, held an important place. During this fourth period Boullan isolated himself from the other occultist groups and remained in conflict with them until his death, on 4th January 1893, "as a saint and a martyr" according to Mme. Thibault (Mme. Bavoil of *Là-Bas*). In reality, he left a less edifying reputation. Huysmans' judgment in matters of occultism was shaky; he began by regarding Boullan as an apostle, but after reading his "confessions" he ended by admitting the suspect character of his work.

² On Boullan and Vintras, see the work which appeared in 1927 in the Documents Bleus of the "Nouvelle Revue Française": *Les Aventuriers du Mystère*, by Frédéric Boutet, pp. 94-112; also *Vintras hérésiarque et prophète*, by Maurice Garçon (Paris, Nourry, 1928).



Pl. 13. The feathered serpent, Quetzalcoatl. Aztec carving from the pyramid temple at Xochicalco, Mexico.



Pl. 14. The earth goddess Coatlicue. (Mexico Museum.)

his avowals, and successively accused the Roman priests, whom he named the "horned ones of the priesthood".

M. Louis Massignon, professor of the Collège de France, tells us in *La Salette* ("Témoignages", Bloud et Gay, 1946, pp. 94-6) that it was only in 1893, after the death of Boullan, that Huysmans discovered this satanic document among his (Boullan's) papers, which had been given him by Mme. Thibault (Mme. Bavoil). Before that, Huysmans had portrayed Boullan as "Dr. Johannes" of *Là-Bas*.¹

Excepted from the general mandate of the executors of Lucien Descaves, Boullan's papers were given by Huysmans to Léon Leclaire, his companion of Ligugé and of Schiedam, who passed them on, with full authorisation, to M. Louis Massignon. On 14th July 1930 M. Massignon conveyed them through a diplomatic channel to Mgr. J. Mercati, who placed them in the archives of the Vatican Library. In addition to one hundred and eight letters from Boullan to Huysmans, there is preserved in Rome this manuscript on pink paper, to which is added a lithographed dossier of fifteen pages relating to the cure of Adèle Chevalier at La Salette in 1854. (In 1856 Boullan knew the miraculously cured Adèle, "whose religious vocation was later to founder, taking her with it"). Two copybooks of cream-coloured paper were sent to Mgr. Mercati, one of seventeen pages written by Adèle Chevalier, the other of twelve pages written by Boullan.

Through the kindness of the Very Rev. Fr. Prefect of the Vatican Library, I have in my possession a photographic copy of the pink manuscript of fourteen pages, of which the following is an analysis:

- f° 1 to f° 4 Avowal of his faults signed at Rome, 26th May 1869.
- f° 5 to f° 8^a Exposé of the facts. Innocence from civil point of view. Same date.

¹ Huysmans himself told M. Massignon that "Chanoine Docre" was Canon Van Haecke, but the figure of Docre owes much to what Huysmans had learned from Boullan. Rightly or wrongly, Boullan accused, in the presence of the author of *Là-Bas*, a certain Abbé Roca, a freemason priest who died excommunicated, after being the "chaplain" of a group of occultists in Paris. This group, of which Stanislas de Guaita was the central figure, had denounced Boullan publicly. We may here recall the duel of Jules Bois with Stanislas de Guaita. See *Les Aventuriers de Mystère*, pp. 129, 130, 142-4.

- f° 8^b Solemn judgment against the "horned ones" of the priesthood, 28th-29th May.
- f°s 9-10 History of his Celebret, first withdrawn, then restored, 29th May.
- f° 11^a Judgment against his Judges of 2nd June.
- f° 11^b-12^a Confession and avowals concerning diabolical illusions. Boullan asks forgiveness, after seven years of cruel trials.
- f° 12^b Judgment of 5th June against the priests who want to prosecute the former Sisters.
6th June. Judgment of eternal perdition against any who should take action against Boullan and Mlle. Chevalier concerning the event of 8th December.
- f° 13^a Different questions addressed to the Commissioner.
- f° 13^b Solemn judgment of 16th June 1869. The "horned ones" have no right to impede victory.
- f°s 14 and ^b Blank.

P. BRUNO DE JÉSUS-MARIE O.C.D.

PSYCHIATRIC STUDY

The confession of the Abbé Boullan provides material for the psychological study of a category of demoniacs who are almost pathological cases. It is a mixture of fairly accurate analysis, guilt-obsessions and cravings for pardon, and of condemnations of real and imaginary enemies.

Boullan cultivated the acquaintance of the writers of 1860, and we know that he continued to do so till his death. He lived in a milieu of "foolish and demoniacal women, according to the judgment one could form of them" (p. 1). One of them was an epileptic. The cultivation of these women contrasts with his avowal that "he has no aptitude" for the direction of women (p. 9). Was he not rather directed by them? These indications serve to fix the character of Boullan.

The life of the instincts predominated in him at certain times, and arrested his affective development by diverting it into an erotic scatology of a childish variety, which was in marked contrast with his intelligence. To gratify his perverse

tendencies, he assumed the attitude of a healer, and spoke of remedies to be applied, of medical precautions to be taken.

A spirit of curiosity, at once unhealthy and naïve, led him to study the effects of sin and the limits of the devil's action during the dangerous "experiments" (pp. 7 and 22) which were often the source of his faults.

This is how he explains his faults. "My sins have a triple source, origin or principle: in the first place, the feebleness and fragility of my corrupt nature; the illusions of the devil calculated to deceive me and to lead my spirit astray; finally, my way of understanding things which leads me into many things worthy of blame and reprehension" (p. 2). At the time of this confession he was conscious of his lack of self-control, of the falseness of his judgments, of the perversion of his instincts. He verged on sacrilege in his attempts to cure certain possessed persons. He went from one extreme to the other, alternating suggestions and orders which were calculated to lead on to worse faults, with so-called means of defending oneself against them.

Money played an important part in the life of this priest. He depicts himself as one "earning plenty of money" (p. 6) in Paris, before founding the work that was the source of all his misfortunes. He bought a château and spent a considerable sum on it. His obsession with money led him to swindle, and as a result he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The enquiry showed that he had taken advantage of certain revelations concerning the hereafter to exploit the credulous and induce them to give him money, that he might have the pleasure of bestowing it on others.

The confession proper is written in a spirit of extreme humility and keen desire for pardon. In the list he gives he distinguishes between his "errors, illusions, faults, sins and lapses" (p. 8). His pride comes out, nevertheless, in his account of an interview with Jules Favre.

Then follow, unexpectedly, the "solemn judgments" pronounced by Boullan alone against "the horned ones of the priesthood". These horned ones are accused of having brought influence to bear at Rome to make the ecclesiastical judges condemn him and the ex-nun, Adèle Chevalier. They will be condemned to hell, for eternity or for a time, and they will be imprisoned in the tower of Babel (*sic*), in discharge of all their

debts to him! The priest in charge of the trial is one of his principal enemies. These "judgments" follow the classical lines of the persecuted. They betray the pride and aggressive defiance of their author.

Boullan is the typical paranoiac and religious reformer—the proud victim, viewing facts with a diseased mind which exaggerated everything. Like many such people, he behaved with instinctive and impulsive eroticism, combining sexual lust with lust for money. He was moreover, a misfit, even in the small heretical milieu of Vintras's few disciples, who expelled him from their circle.

JEAN VINCHON

"Boullan," Frank Duquesne tells us, "is not an accident. He is one of a recognisable line in the history of religious aberration. His case, indeed, throws light on certain obscure manifestations, for he has a place in that offshoot of orgiastic mysteries found in all religions as a deviation, a 'warping' of the worship paid to the Sophia or Holy Wisdom. The gnostic sects saw in the Holy Spirit the 'feminine principle' of the Divinity. The whole doctrine of Boullan prolongs and continues the 'paraclitic', pseudo-marial, simili-charismatic current of the mediaeval Illuminati (Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit, Béghards and Béghines, etc.).

"Besides having spiritual ancestors, Boullan did not lack descendants. He died in 1893, and some of his followers returned to their own country, to Moravia or the part of Poland then under Austria. It was there that, in about 1894, Marie-Francesca Kozłowska, a Franciscan nun, later to be known as Matouchka (Mother), began to announce her prophecies. Her illuminism led astray certain priests, ecclesiastics enamoured of anarchical asceticism and mysticism—Kowalski, Prochniewski, etc.—and led to the formal condemnation by Pius X, in 1903, of the 'Mariavite' (*de Mariae vita*) movement. The sectaries separated from Rome and founded the Mariavite Church, whose Patriarch (Kowalski) and Bishops were (validly) consecrated by the Old Catholic (Jansenist) Bishops of Holland in 1909. Boullan's dream was realised.

"But the doctrine and practice of 'mystical marriages'—borrowed, like almost everything else, from Boullan, and aiming

at the procreation without concupiscence (*sic*) of children born in consequence (*sic*) without original sin (*sic*)—caused untold scandal. The ‘spiritual polygamy’ (*sic*) of the Mariavites has become so well established that, at the international Old Catholic Congress of Berne, in 1924, the whole Mariavite Church, which then numbered nearly 600,000 faithful, was excommunicated! Since then, several of its high officials have incurred serious penalties in the Courts of Assizes on charges relating to morals.

“A detailed account of an attenuated Mariavitism (which has 100,000 adherents today) can be found in the collection *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. The characteristic traits of the sect are pure Boullan, to which is added the particular role of Matouchka as ‘the incarnation of the Blessed Virgin’, the self-styled *mulier amicta sole* for the salvation of the human race at this time when the Latter Days are close at hand. (This point was noticed by Pius X in his Brief against the Mariavites.)”

We did not think fit to publish the complete text of the Confession of Boullan. The reader will pardon the omission, when we assure him that he could not have stomached the reading of it. Apart from the interesting points we have noted, it would merely occasion disgust and even boredom. It is more fitting to keep such matter within bounds, and even when one does so, one still runs the risk of offending sensitive readers. The subject of this important volume made some such study inevitable. Let that stand as our excuse for writing it at all.

P. BRUNO DE JÉSUS-MARIE, O.C.D.

DREAM DEMONS ¹

IN HIS work *Die Schlaf-und Traumzustände der menschlichen Seele* (Tübingen, 1878)—“The Human Soul in Sleep and in Dream”—Heinrich Spitta, philosopher and psychologist of Tübingen, describes the phenomenon of nightmare as follows: “The apparition of a *kobold* or a monster, squatting on the chest of the sleeper, moving nearer and nearer to his throat and threatening to strangle him. . . . It is so clear and so evident, that it causes great anguish. . . . The sleeper tries in vain to defend himself against this horrible apparition; he tries to cry out, but his voice is strangled in his throat, his limbs seem paralysed, sweat pours from him, his hands are like ice. Suddenly, he comes to with a cry, to fall back again on his bed, exhausted, but with the relieved feeling that he has just escaped from imminent danger of death.” According to Spitta, a moment of functional inhibition, especially in the case of asthmatics, or great disturbances of one’s routine, are probably the causes of nightmare.

Dyspnoea, an anguished paralysis, oppression and suffocation, “chamade” or wild beating of the heart, with, at times, complete aphonia, rigidity of the limbs, or, on the contrary, spasmodic tremblings—all associated with the vision of a monster of hairy, animal appearance, pressing on the chest, have everywhere and always been the characteristics of nightmare.

Those who have studied the matter have inclined to one of two explanations, according to their own general outlook: either the manifestations are due to physical troubles (obstructed respiration or circulation of the blood, caused by the position of the sleeper, the weight of the bedclothes, digestive troubles, feverish delirium, etc.); or they are due to “spirits”. Theories qualified as “scientific” hold to the first explanation in attempting to throw light on this wide-spread phenomenon, which has always

¹ We here publish a contribution by an assistant of the celebrated Swiss psychotherapist, C. G. Jung, Dr. Jacobi. The point of view which she expresses is of course that of medico-psychological observation only.

been the source of much suffering, as well as of many myths and legends. The first, the purely physical, explanation was also accepted by some of the medical men of antiquity, who based themselves on the conscientious researches undertaken by Soranus of Ephesus, at the beginning of the second century A.D., into the nature, origin and treatment of nightmare. Their successors in modern times have adopted a similar attitude, believing that everything psychic can be reduced to manifestations of purely



NIGHTMARE. The sleeper lies on his back, a position conducive to nightmare. The devil torments him with his pitchfork, while a goblin—the elemental of the occult sciences—harasses him with the phantasms of nightmare. We may recall the Compline hymn: *Procul recedent somnia, et noxium phantasmata; hostemque nostrum comprime, ne polluantur corpora*. Wood-engraving by Hans Weiditz, in *Trostspiegel für Glück und Unglück des Francesco Petrarca*, Augsburg, 1532.

physical phenomena. The popular notion, however, which found expression in numerous treatises, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, derives from the opposite attitude—from belief in “phantoms”.

The rigorously medico-physiological theories give little room to the imagination; belief in spirits, on the contrary, nourishes it. It is therefore through belief in spirits that a countless series of myths and legends, of savage and fantastic shadows, has been able to gain general credence. These spirits have various names: “Ephialtes” with the Greeks; “incubi” and “succubi” in the

Middle Ages; "Alp", "Mahr", "Wüarger", that is to say, strangler, with the Germans; "Gespenst" or spectre; "Nacht-kobold", or night gnome; "Auflieger" or crusher; "Quälgeist" or tormenting spirit; "Kikimara" with the Russians; "Mara" in nordic idioms, from which is derived the French "cauchemar" (from "caucher", to oppress, trample down—Latin "cal-care", —and "mar", demon); "Schrätelli", "chauchevieille", etc., in Switzerland. This wide choice of names implies many attributes and many legends. The nightmares are presented, now in animal shape, now like humans; sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly, sometimes masculine, sometimes feminine, and so on. They have been made almost Olympian, for they have been regarded as the avatars of the gods, or again, with very different attributes, as demons. They have been identified with Pan, for example, from whose name we get "panic"; with the Fauns, Sylvens and Satyrs of antiquity. In the Middle Ages, the devil had as courtiers demons and spectres, mandrakes, incubi, succubi, sorcerers and phantoms of every kind; sometimes simply obscene, sometimes merely bestial. Sceptics tried to explain away these last, especially when they were conceived as rough and hairy, by saying that they were due to the sleeper's being covered with skins of goats or of sheep, which impeded his breathing. The same reason is given for the belief in "sylvan deities" who attack men. In Montenegro (according to B. Stern, *Medizin, Aberglaube und Geschlechtsleben in der Türkei*, Berlin, 1903) there was a female spirit, winged with flame, called *Vjeschitza*, who crouched on the chest of the sleeper and either suffocated him or drove him mad with obscene embraces.

The intimate connection between the visions of dream and the hallucinations of the insane gave rise to the old popular belief that the demons of nightmare are also the cause of madness. This was the opinion of the doctors of antiquity, who saw in chronic nightmare the origin of madness, epilepsy and even apoplexy. The vampire, that night phantom who sucked the blood of the sleeper, was also looked on as one of the nightmare family. Animals, even, and especially horses, were supposed to be subject to the torment of demons, who installed themselves on their rumps. There was also the phenomenon of collective nightmares. Some old accounts worthy of credence—among others, that of M.

H. Strahl (1800-60): *Der Alp, sein Wesen und seine Heilung* (Berlin, 1833), tell of a whole regiment, of entire villages, of human groups of all categories, having had the same nightmare at the same time. These phenomena arise from the same psychic conditions which are at the root of mediaeval psychic epidemics,

DEMONS AND PYTHONESSES. The picture is remarkable for the absence of any human being. The pythoness is represented simply by the tripod, situated, as at Delphi, in a cave full of fumes. In point of fact, a devil has taken her place, and it is unnecessary to emphasise just what, in this picture, is performing the office of oracle. The incomplete being, in the left foreground, represents an elemental—here an “invisible faun”, who at the bidding of the magician, produces the *mirabilia* of Hell. From *Lilii Gregorii Giraldi Ferrariensis Opera omnia . . . de deis gentium, Musis et Hercule . . .*, Lugduni Batavorum, 1696, vol. 1, p. 75.



mass flagellation, popular belief in possession and sorcery, and so on.

According to their influence on man and to the forms they assumed, nightmare spirits were divided into good and bad, into provokers of terror and bestowed of erotic delights (those of the *Alpminne* or “goblin love”). Whatever their character, there was nothing to choose between them as regards their purely diabolical properties, and therefore they were always looked on as dangerous. The incubus, who came at night to tempt women, and the succubus, that nocturnal seducer of men—both being objects of horror to the Middle Ages, but often both feared and desired—had sexual relations with the sleepers. Not popular credulity only, but also

the theologians, attributed quite a considerable rôle to them. No one at that time would have dared to doubt their existence, for did not even St. Augustine believe in them? (*De Civ. Dei.* xv. 23). Many doctors, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, studied them zealously, and often had recourse to very strange speculations to "explain" them. Paracelsus, for instance, who was both a doctor and a brilliant thinker, believed that he had discovered three "bodies" in every individual: the material body, earthly and visible; the "astral" body, ethereal, invisible; and the spiritual body, the fire of the Holy Spirit in us. He considered that nocturnal demons were the product of our "imagination", that is, of our "astral" nature. In his *Traité des Maladies invisibles* (ed. Sudhoff, ix. p. 302), he says: "This imagination comes from our astral body, in virtue of a kind of heroic love; it is an action which is not accomplished in carnal copulation. Isolated and alone, this love is at once the father and the mother of the pneumatic sperm. From these psychic sperms are born the incubi who oppress women, and the succubi who attach themselves to men." The great Paracelsus understood clearly, therefore, that succubi and incubi were imaginary visions, or phantoms, and not real persons. His definition corresponds to the findings of modern psychoanalysis, which regards them as products of sexual *phantasia*. Stimulated by credulity, the imagination invented complete *romances* on the misdeeds of these spirits—romances which, to this day, have been the material for innumerable works of art and poetry. We may mention, among others, the magnificent series of Goya, "Caprices", and the impressive "Succube" in the *Contes Drôlatiques* of Balzac.

In the Middle Ages, especially, belief in these demons caused veritable epidemics even in convents. Nightmares, it was believed, tormented women more than men, and widows and virgins more than any others. Many men and women have been burned alive for having had dealings with evil spirits. Every witch was thought to have had sexual relations with an incubus; many innocent women perished at the stake, because one nightmare sufficed as proof of obscene commerce with a diabolical "rider of women". These nightmare demons were supposed to enter through key-holes, through cracks in the wainscoting or chinks in the window-frames, and this proved their kinship with witches and other diabolical creatures. It was thought that they

could not beget or conceive, but if by any chance they did give birth to a child, that child was fated to become a witch, a monster or some other extraordinary creature. The enchanter Merlin, for example, in the Arthurian cycle, was regarded as having had such parentage. In Germany, if a man bore a strong resemblance to an animal, it was attributed to the influence of the

WITCHES' AND WIZARDS' SABBATH. A witch pursues a wizard through the air. In the foreground a diminutive devil smokes the famous pyrophoric pipe, and in the middle distance can be seen the veneration of the goat according to the well-known rite of Mopses (eighteenth century): *osculum in fine spinæ dorsi*. A witch, accompanied by her familiar under the form of a young goat, prepares a philtre. In the background, the master of the revels, again a goat, emits the traditional magical effluvia. From *Daemonolatria, oder Beschreibung von Zauber- und Zauberinnen . . .*, Hamburg, 1703, vol. II, p. 325.



demons of nightmare, who themselves were of animal nature; physical malformation, birthmarks, clubbed feet, etc., served as criteria in these matters. To explain their gross, barbarous and bestial nature, a legend grew up that the Huns had been born of concubinage between women and devils. The people of Antiquity had always regarded creatures of the "fairy" family as particularly dangerous, because of their seductive, wholly magical power.

Some of them were thought to fascinate men by their songs, to render them powerless and then to tear them.

Psychoanalysis has put forward a new "explanation" of dreams, substituting a "psychological" formula for the mediaeval conception of the "nightmare-demon". It hopes thus to establish a therapeutic method which will render this demon harmless and, in some sort, exorcise. J. Jones, one of the foremost of the Freudian School of London, has devoted an interesting volume to a specialist treatment of this problem: *Nightmare and its Connection with Certain Forms of Mediaeval Superstition*, (*Der Alptraum in seiner Beziehung zu gewissen Formen des mittelalterlichen Aberglaubens*) which appeared in *Schriften zur angewandten Seelenkunde*, vol. 14 (Vienna, 1912). He refutes both the exclusively physiological theories and the folklore theories based on popular belief in "spirits".

In all these cases, he concludes, there is involved a phenomenon, based on a violent psychical complex, whose "nucleus is formed by a psycho-sexual repression, which reacts to peripheral excitations". So far, the problem is clear. But Jones continues: "The latent content of nightmare consists in the representation of the normal sex act, and that in a characteristically feminine manner: oppression of the chest, complete giving of self, expressed by the sensation of paralysis, the eventual genital secretion, etc. The other symptoms—for example, violent beating of the heart, a sensation of suffocation, and so on—are merely exaggerations of the sensations normally experienced during the sex act in the waking state". He holds that "violently repressed desires" can be satisfied in this way; for example, in extreme repression of incestuous desires, sentiments of fear prevail over the sensation of lust. The nightmare, Jones continues, invariably reflects the normal process of coition, and it is distinguished from other forms of bad dream only by its latent content, which is "special and definitely fixed". Thus, the two extremes—attraction and repulsion—can be referred to two forces—desire and inhibition—struggling with each other. Without concerning itself with the precise and detailed content of these nightmares, this interpretation classes the "spirits" in them among those known to the Middle Ages as incubi and succubi, which were always clearly distinguished from other dream-devils. The Church, indeed, always defined the incubus as a devil of human appearance, while

phantoms of animal appearance belonged to another category of "spirits".

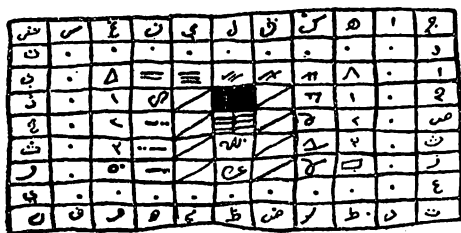
The war with these spirits varied according to the opinion held of them. It is not surprising that a great diversity of means, born of superstition, were in constant use, together with thousands of "serious" medical prescriptions. One of the fundamental ideas of magic is at all times the belief in the influence of incantations on the gods. Hence, the man who believed that the will of the gods was revealed in his premonitory dreams, did his utmost to

TALISMAN AGAINST NIGHTMARE. A scorpion, whose body is covered with written characters; it protects the sleeper against nightmares, incubi, succubi, and fever-spreading genii. From *Talismans, Amulettes et Pentacles dans les traditions orientales et occidentales* (after Wadell, *Lamaism*, London, 1895) by Jean Marquès-Rivière, Paris 1938, p. 227.



be visited only by favourable dreams. Prevention is better than cure: it is important, therefore, to recognise and promptly to follow the warnings of the gods, making them our friends, that they may shelter us from the consequences of bad dreams. It is best to dispel these dreams before they have time to visit us, by means of traditional counter-spells, rites and prescriptions, too numerous to list. With certain peoples, for example the Greeks, religious ceremonies were used to prevent dreams of evil augury from being realised: they were liturgically notified, in all sincerity, to the sun-god. Exorcised by this "disoccultation", the nocturnal

demons had no choice but to vanish. Another propitiatory method was that of sacrifice. It was believed that certain ascetic exercises had power to "rectify" a bad dream. The interminable repetition of a magical formula had the power to avert evil and attract good fortune. Certain Hindus thought to live a hundred years by constantly repeating: *Om*—victory over death—even if the chanter had already seen himself dead in dream (*La clef des songes de Jaggadeva*, p. 30). Talismans and amulets, always highly valued, were specially chosen according to circumstances, because they were considered very powerful against demoniacal dreams. The Mahomettans used pieces of paper covered with verses from the Koran and different astrological and magical symbols, which



PENTACLE FOR BANISHING NIGHTMARES. These "secret" signs were written on pieces of paper which we made into a little ball and swallowed before going to bed. (They were also worn around the neck during sleep). This type of formula was much used in both the East and the West. Extract from *Amulettes, Talismans et Pentacles dans les traditions orientales et occidentales* by Jean Marquès-Rivière, Paris, 1938, p. 358.

were sewn in the lining of clothes or in bags worn at night on the breast or around the neck, as a precaution against nightmares. These practices were considered to have excellent results. Other magical formulae, called Pentacles, prevented nightmares and induced beneficent dreams. Before one retired to sleep, one rolled them into a little ball and swallowed them with some water.¹

Superstition has never died; it survives everything and raises its hydra-head in the most unexpected places, every time an effort is made to end it. Needless to say, the medico-scientific mind has always rejected its practices, and has attempted, on its own account, to control the birth and growth of dreams by prescribing

¹ The Christian Kurds, to whom the Church forbade recourse to talismans, protected themselves against nightmares by moistening the eyes and the forehead with holy water, or by sprinkling it on the bed. Another precaution was to place under the pillow some blessed olives or candles. Some people again would compose themselves to sleep with a little wooden cross about their neck: there were even those who, in the course of the evening, swallowed a pinch of earth taken from the neighbourhood of a saint's tomb.

certain food and drink, or, more conformably to modern ideas, by prescribing certain chemical preparations. The doctors of Antiquity use bleeding, hellebore, the *paeonia* (of the genus *ranunculus*) and recommended a suitable diet. The Pythagoreans advised against the eating of beans, which caused flatulence, which in turn caused nightmares. It was fatal to dream as a result of eating beans, for the flatulence due to them was caused by the spirits of the dead, who dwelt in these vegetables and avenged themselves on the sleeper. In his *Treatise on the Incubus or Nightmare* (London, 1816) Dr. A. Waller holds, on the contrary, that nightmares are caused by hyperacidity of the stomach, and can be prevented by taking potassium carbonate.

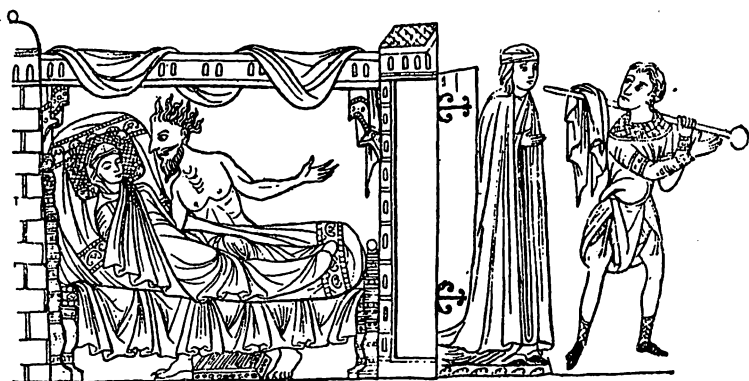
The Middle Ages produced innumerable panaceas, strange and said to be infallible, the fruit of popular experience, individual observation, astrological notions, theories on the "signatures" of plants, etc. In our day, too, wherever superstition thrives, one finds at every step counter-charms, with their amulets, talismans and pentacles, their secret practices and prescriptions.

There were some, notably the psychologists of the last century, who thought nightmare could be explained by purely physiological causes, and that it could be brought on deliberately for experimental purposes, and thus forced out of its hiding place and destroyed. An attempt was therefore made to provoke nightmares, by making the subject lie in a certain position or submit to pressure on a certain part of the body, etc. But these experiments were never successful in provoking a given oniric result, corresponding to each experiment and repeatable at will. According to psychoanalytical teaching—especially that of Jones, who sees in the different forms of modern psychoneurosis and their various symptoms the "descendants" of the sorcerers, lycanthropes, etc. of other times—one cannot be delivered from nightmare and its horrors, unless its cause, discovered by psychoanalysis to be the repression of sexual impulses, is seen in the full light of consciousness.

In spite of its very modern character, the Freudian conception of nightmare is nevertheless to some extent akin to the old concept, which attributed to "Pan-Ephialtes" the responsibility for *pavor nocturnus* (nocturnal terror), but also the power to liberate from it; the feeling of liberation which succeeds the anguish can be considered, indeed, as equivalent to the realisation of a desire.

In the second century of our era, Pausonias relates, a sanctuary was erected at Tresena in Argolida to the saviour Pan, because he had revealed in a dream to a municipal aedile the effective means of combating a terrible epidemic (Pausonias, ii, 32, 6).

Popular belief, also, has always seen in the nightmare-devil not only a corrupting action but also a beneficent power, which could reveal certain secrets, as for example the place of some treasure or the formula of a marvellous remedy. Thus the demons of nightmare have gone the way of all the ideas which have issued



THE DREAM OF CLAUDIA PROCULA, WIFE OF PILATE. This scene has very rarely been depicted; Satan attempts to prevent the salvation of the human race. It will be recalled that Pilate's wife told her husband that she had had a dream which greatly disturbed her: *Sedente autem illo [sc. Pilato] pro tribunali, misit ad eum uxor ejus, dicens: Nihil tibi et justo illi; multa enim passa sum hodie per visum propter eum* (Matt., xxvii, 19). From *Hortus Deliciarum* of the nun, Herrad of Landsberg, end of the twelfth century. New edition, Keller-Straub, Strasburg, 1879, p. xxxvii.

from the age-old depths of the human soul, and which are at once beneficent and enlightening, maleficent and infernal. On the other hand, while psychoanalysis sees in the nightmare the manifestation and projection of the sexual trend of the unconscious, Complex Psychology, created by C. G. Jung, has made of the matrix-ideas or "archetypes" of the collective unconscious, the symbolic messengers of the Kingdom of Dreams, which is the image used to express those instinctive, archaic and primitive forces of the soul, by means of which man is confronted with his "shadow", and profoundly impressed by it. It is in this sense that we can truly say that "the first nightmare is the father of all mythology"; without it and its many forms, belief

in "spirits" would never have developed to the extent to which it did. Even Kant, for whom scientific explanations certainly took precedence over belief in "spirits", was led to attribute quite a beneficent quality to these spirits, in spite of their terrifying nature (*Anthropology*, Frankfort-Leipzig, 1799, p. 112). "Without the terrifying apparition of a phantom which crushes us, without the consecutive use of all our muscles in changing our position, the circulation of the blood might be impeded and death might be the result. It is for this very reason that nature seems to have arranged things in such a way that the majority of dreams bring discomfort with them. For such presentations excite the forces of the soul much more than when everything during sleep is agreeable to us." In this, Kant is in line with the most modern psychological ideas on the problem of dreams.

Thus it is that the solutions and therapeutics of each age conform to the spirit of that age. It remains to be seen if we today, in spite of all our efforts, have succeeded in discovering all the secrets of this mysterious form of dream.

JOLANDE JACOBI

NIGHT AND DREAM. Night, dressed in her starry mantle, holds in her arms the twins Death and Sleep, the one dark, the other fair. She is crowned with verbena—a plant associated with magic. Over her there hovers, with eyes almost closed the winged figure of the Dream. He carries in one hand the horn of plenty, from which good dreams—those which will be fulfilled—rise in the form of smoke. In the other hand, he holds an ivory wand, symbolising the bad dreams which will not be fulfilled. From *Lei imagini dei Dei degli Antichi*, Lione 1581, by Vincenzo Catari.



1. - Night and Dream

PSEUDO-POSSESSION

Demonopathic Psychoses

AS THE trial of Anne de Chantraine shows, even a short time ago it was decidedly dangerous to be suspected of holding intercourse with the devil, and those who were so suspected were threatened by the most dire tortures. In this respect, at least, we have grown more compassionate and humane.

It must be admitted that the science of psychiatry takes a very humble place among the other biological disciplines, for psychiatry operates on a plane where soul and body meet, and we still do not know how that "seam of soul and body" is made. In spite of this, however, we must admit that our knowledge of mental disorders began greatly to improve from the time when spiritual disturbances ceased to be regarded purely as an expression of supernatural influence and were seen as evidence of modifications in the development or the adjustment of psychophysiological functions. There is no psychiatrist today who could not with the greatest ease discover under the mask of witchcraft in the past the most significant symptoms of psychoses, such as come up for treatment every day.

The sole aim of any doctor investigating the matter must be to trace the origin and source of demonopathy, to unravel its strands, often much entangled, to identify the process at work, whether psychic or organic, and finally to cure or at least diminish the pathological deviations of the mind. This is his task, and one may if one wishes consider it a humble one, since it must not transgress the frontiers of natural phenomena, but has to remain aloof from the far loftier problems which call for the notice and powers of discernment of the philosopher and theologian.

Our discussion, therefore, is limited to precisely this: can we discover, in certain persons supposedly possessed by the devil, any signs which would permit us to relate the idea of demonopathic

possession to a morbid process—that is to say, to an illness properly so called?

It is, of course, true that the diagnosis of mental disturbances differs somewhat from that of organic physical diseases, for the latter produce not only objectively obvious symptoms, but also evidence of a still more positive nature in the alterations of the organic texture.

This is not so in the case of the psychopathies; for most of them, the anatomical basis is wanting, which does not mean it is non-existent. Still, even if the anatomical control fails us, we are entitled to diagnose illness in those cases where the deviation of the mind is accompanied by certain features which remain constant whatever the education or social conditions of the affected persons. Moreover, given a psycho-pathological syndrome, its development can be foreseen, together with its social and medico-legal consequences. It is strange, too, to observe that the patho-psychological reactions of man at his most highly civilised are not very numerous; it is the colouring, the content of the delirium, rather than its inner structure, its foundation, its essence, which has the most varied (and often picturesque) aspect. Whether a paranoiac feels himself persecuted by waves from "the other side", by the Freemasons, by the Jesuits, by this or that imaginary person or group of persons, or by the devil, makes no difference. The disease will reveal itself as being more or less complex, more or less interesting in its details: the patient's complaints and recriminations will be more or less plausible or completely unlikely; but the development and prognosis will not be modified, any more than the preventive treatment or the attempted cure.

Indeed, it would be too much to ask of the doctor more than a careful diagnosis, accompanied by an accurate prognosis and efficient treatment.

This said, we will attempt to present an analysis of the facts relevant to the demoniac possessions with which the psychiatrist has to deal.

Let us first examine the way in which a possessed person is represented in popular works on the subject. It is, I think, the moral transformation of the victim which has most struck the non-scientific observer.

The patient does, indeed, appear to be transformed, penetrated by a new personality which is superimposed on or juxtaposed to the individual's real personality. In those accounts which can be found in M. Oesterreich's interestingly documented collection,¹ the possessed person not only gives the impression of being invaded by another soul, but even his physiognomy, his bearing and his social behaviour seem transformed.

It goes without saying that this apparent metamorphosis is not continuous, but is visible only during those periods when the state of possession is at its most acute—that is to say during moments of trance: but this corporeal change, essentially dynamic, becomes extremely personal in each possessed subject, so that he gives the impression that his physical personality is truly transformed into an alien personality.

"Every time the devil seized her," says Eschenmayer of a woman who believed that she was possessed by the spirit of a dead person, "her face assumed the features which distinguished the dead man during his life, and as these were very pronounced, it was necessary at every attack to keep the woman away from people who had known the dead man, for they at once recognised him under the features of the demoniac woman."

Another point of interest is that the new character or attitude, the change of conduct which marks the person in a state of trance or possession, is opposed in every detail to the possessed person's own primary personality. Witnesses of these scenes are astonished, indignant even, at hearing the foulest insults, the most obscene words, from the mouth of a young girl whose education and morals might have been thought irreconcilable with such an outburst of the lowest passions and the coarsest possible language.

It was said of the young girl of Orlach described by Eschenmayer that "during the attacks, the spirit of darkness speaks through her mouth like a mad devil, saying things which a young girl of upright heart should not know—maledictions of Holy Writ, of the Saviour, of all that is sacred".

I have, myself, observed cases of this kind which are indeed astonishing, for one wonders where these well brought-up and sheltered young girls could have learnt the vocabulary they pour forth with such violence during their attacks.

In all the numerous examples of demoniacal possession found

¹ OESTERREICH, *Les Possédés* (1 vol., Payot).

in the abundant literature devoted to the subject, invasion by the demoniac personality is only evident in certain states, called attacks or trances, during which the possessed person no longer controls himself and even loses consciousness of his own natural personality. It cannot therefore be said that a splitting of the personality occurs, but rather, as Eschenmayer and Oesterreich maintain, that the loss or lapse of consciousness becomes an essential characteristic of demoniac possession; to this suspension of the functions of consciousness can be added the subsequent total forgetfulness of what has occurred during the attack.

It is incontestable that such phenomena have occurred and continue to occur in our times, but we are better equipped to understand their nature and origin than were our predecessors. Indeed, there is a disease of frequent incidence which is characterised by the temporary loss of consciousness and the transformation of its victim into an automaton controlled by ideas, sentiments and memories entirely alien to those he normally entertains—even entirely opposed to his true personality. This disease is epilepsy; it is the *morbus sacer*, the sacred ill, the “high ill”, the “comitial ill” of the ancients.

Contrary to general belief, epilepsy does not manifest itself only by convulsions, which animals, too, can suffer, but also very frequently by sudden changes of the moral personality—catastrophic upheavals which may last any length of time from a few moments to several hours or days. The sick person remembers nothing of what occurred during these attacks. Yet today it is possible for us not only to define the epileptic disease with absolute precision from the features of the clinical context, but also to specify the nature of the mental disorder, thanks to the detection of special waves shown by the electro-encephalographic apparatus.

But if epilepsy can simulate a state of demoniac possession, there is another morbid state, also very common, which is found underlying the manifestations examined in these pages: this is the “great neurosis” of Charcot—hysteria. Most of the cases of possession characterised by trances during which the victim’s personality appears transformed, and by stormy, theatrical manifestations, whose violence is proportioned to the audience available, can undoubtedly be related to this neurosis. It is true that the hysterical person’s state of consciousness is very different from that of the epileptic, and that if it does become to some extent clouded,

this clouding does not reach the degree of utter annihilation of the consciousness which characterises the disease of epilepsy. Nevertheless, as I have shown elsewhere,¹ the "great neurosis" of Charcot is not made up solely of deceit, theatricality, mockery, mythogenesis and pathogenesis, as some doctors have maintained. There is also a genuine disorder of the mind and of the consciousness, shown by the curious reactions of the electro-encephalographic apparatus, as revealed in the remarkable studies of Titéca (Brussels).

In an hysterical attack, the consciousness does not suffer total annihilation, in the Jacksonian sense, as it does in the case of epilepsy: but there is too much evidence for us to doubt that some suspension or considerable weakening of certain psychic functions does take place. It is thus easy to understand why psychologists, and in particular M. Oesterreich in his important work devoted to the study of the possessed, feel that all states of possession during which the normal individuality is suddenly replaced by another temporary personality, and which leave no memory when the victim returns to a normal state, should be known as somnambulant. If we put on one side for a moment the factor relating to complete loss of memory, which disregards the difference between epilepsy and hysteria, the author's thesis is one which we may accept.

As I have indicated above, the "great neurosis" is essentially contagious, a fact of which the experiments at the Salpêtrière, under Charcot, are a striking proof. It is then to hysterical demonopathy that we should relate the great majority of, if not all, epidemics of possession. Such epidemics were extremely numerous in the days when the manifestations of "the great deceiver", hysteria, were but imperfectly known.

Everyone remembers the epidemics of possession which raged in the world at a time when psychiatry had barely come into being: the examples produced by these epidemics showed most clearly the symptoms of hysterical psycho-neurosis, or of pithiatism; that is to say, of that neurosis where simulation and mythomania act together. It must not, however, be thought that our forerunners knew nothing of pithiatism. Take the case of Marthe Brossier, whose trial took place in the reign of Henri IV.² Marthe was a

¹ J. LHERMITTE, "Qu'est-ce que l'hystérie?" *Année Théologique* (1942).

² For the case of Marthe Brossier and the ideas of the period on possessed subjects, cf. chapter xvi of the important work by R. P. BRUNO DE J. M., entitled *La Belle Acarie* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1942).

young girl in poor circumstances, the eldest of four, with an unaffectionate mediocre father. Anxious to get married and seeing her project miscarry, she cut her hair short and wore men's clothes, like Joan of Arc. One day in the year following she suddenly set on a friend of hers called Anne Chevion, scratched her face, and accused her of having ruined all her hopes. She was thought to be possessed by the devil, on account of the violence of her reactions and of the "marvellous things she uttered against the Huguenots"—for this occurred in 1599, the very year of the Edict of Nantes—and she was solemnly exorcised. One reads that Beelzebub swelled her belly, then, several times, bent her body so far back that her head touched her feet, while she shouted: "I am more tormented than if I were in hell"; then submitting to the exorcist's commands, she said, "You will make me to lose my Huguenots."

Confronted with this scandal, Henri IV decided to have Marthe interned in the great Châtelet, where she was visited by doctors and clerics. The experts affirmed that there was no question of a genuine possession, and Henri IV ordered Marthe to be sent back to her father in Romorantin. What, then, had occurred? We have the documents of the trial, and nothing could be more instructive. Doctor Marescot, helped by three of his colleagues, examined the "possessed" girl.

Was she able to understand languages which she had never learnt, as was maintained? No; directly questioned in Greek, in Latin, she remained silent. When exorcised, she indeed fell in to a fainting fit, her thighs quivering like the flanks of an exhausted horse (which is easy enough to imitate). Marthe mocked the exorcist, but, taken to task by Marescot, confessed that the devil had left her. And Marescot concludes: "*Nihil a daemone; multa ficta; a morbosos pauca.*"

Pursuing his demonstration, Marescot wonders on what criteria one may depend to decide on the genuineness of a possession. Convulsions? But charlatans and grooms can imitate them. Insensibility to the insertion of a needle? But the same rogues can bring this off with great success. The absence of blood when the skin is punctured? But this shows only that the veins have not been touched. Ventriloquism? But Hippocrates had already discovered the gift in persons who were beyond any suspicion of witchcraft. The discerning of objects? But Marthe made serious

mistakes: for example, a wrapped key was presented to her as a fragment of the true Cross, and Marthe responded with every conceivable diabolic symptom. Levitation? But if a few persons thought they had seen Marthe suspended in the air without support, it was in the afternoon, when their intelligence had been somewhat dimmed by a hearty meal; nothing similar had occurred in the mornings.

Marescot, whose analytical powers are so remarkable, does not stop there; our colleague wonders what can be the cause of this pretended possession. And he discovers it in the cupidity of Marthe and her father, for the latter had been given sums of money to get his daughter cured. But, Marescot finally asks, how could this Marthe, whose education was scanty, be capable of so many tricks? Here the inquiry shows that Marthe had in point of fact read many books describing deeds attributed to the devil, and that, moreover, she was always being told that she had "*le diable au corps*".

The part played by suggestion, which has been so vigorously denied by Bernheim and Babinski, is seen again in another patient whom, among others, I had occasion to observe. The case is that of a young nun who from the age of fifteen was assailed by sexual trials: obsessions and perhaps compulsions. Her director unwisely told her that the devil was at work, and the girl suddenly felt her personality divided and spellbound by the evil spirit. From then onwards, exorcisms were multiplied until they were performed daily: during these exorcisms the girl threw herself into a thousand contorted attitudes and gave way to the wildest and most fantastic tricks. Worse still, in between the periods of exorcism she began to smash things and to utter prophecies, so that the peace and recollection of the convent were exceedingly disturbed.

We proceeded to examine this patient in the presence of a qualified exorcist, refraining, however, from applying the ritual which had been somewhat immoderately used. We merely asked her to read the prayer to Saint Michael usually recited at the end of Low Mass. As soon as she reached "*defende nos in praelio*", she leapt to her feet, glared at us, overwhelmed us with filthy insults, tore off her wimple and veil and flung them at us. Then she began to twirl and dance and to assume innumerable fantastic postures similar to those observed at the Salpêtrière, in the time of Charcot and Paul Richer.

In a second examination, the same phenomena were repeated, and we decided to apply the electric shock treatment and to isolate the patient. After one month of this, she was completely free from all idea of demoniac possession.

Here is another example: a young girl of twenty drew attention to herself by her conduct and went along to consult a priest because, she said, on Friday afternoon her forehead became covered with blood; to prove this allegation she produced a handkerchief soaked in blood, which turned out, on examination, to be indeed human blood unmixed with any extraneous matter. Her mother was interrogated and reported that for some time past her daughter had become somewhat self-absorbed: "she believes herself to be a saint," she said. "It is just as if there were two persons in her; she keeps vigils, has all sorts of odd ideas."

Then one night, between eleven and midnight, the girl, according to her story, was assaulted by the devil. A man leaped up before her bed; simultaneously the lights went out, while a red glow shone everywhere. The vision of this being, appearing in the shape of a man, filled her with disgust. "I noticed a curious thing," she remarked. "His eyes followed me and his body moved only according to my own movements." This disturbing person tried to kiss her on the forehead and the cheeks, to overpower her, but without success. At times she seemed to hear the devil.

These strange phenomena often drove her, she said, to consult her spiritual director, but he did not understand her, and this completely unstrung her. In an attempt to verify, as far as possible, the truth of her allegations, one of her companions, whose honesty was beyond suspicion, was asked to keep a particularly attentive watch on Ma (this being the patient's first name), day and night, for a fortnight. Her report was as follows:

"I saw openings form on her forehead and blood flow, even while we were walking arm in arm, several Fridays running. I also saw Ma's shoes taken off without her moving; the seat of her chair burnt while she was on it, without her being hurt. At the chapel of the Benedictines, the chairs moved behind Ma, yet nobody could be seen. I have also touched," the watcher continued, "the end of one of her ribs, jutting out under her right arm; Ma herself brought the pieces together again, after a burst of laughter. Sometimes, without apparent cause, she

fell out of bed. One night, something very strange occurred: suddenly I heard Ma scream, she switched on the light, picked up a parcel and then put out the light again; there was a smell of burning and Ma handed me a vest, partly burnt and charred. Sometimes her dress was stained with blood, but I cannot tell where it comes from."

In spite of these extraordinary features in Ma's behaviour, our watcher declared that she believed these phenomena to be quite authentic. "There are sufficient elements," she said, "which do not allow of any doubt about her."

During these observations we had been carrying out an enquiry into Ma's family and its history. We learnt that Ma's father was an alcoholic, as was her grandmother, on the mother's side. Ma, it turned out, had received sufficient education to obtain an elementary certificate. But what was more interesting was that Ma was a proved liar, and evidently a mythomaniac: that, after a pilgrimage to Lourdes, her mother had said to the head-mistress: "That was a nice trick you played on us in taking my daughter to Lourdes; you have brought back a devil."

Before manifestations thus equivocal, we asked Ma to come to my consulting-room, so that we could ourselves observe the flow of blood which was supposed to cover her forehead every Friday.

We were disappointed in this, for on the morning when she was due to present herself she sent us a letter, the essential passages of which are given here:

"I would like to be open with you, but feel as if paralysed and cannot speak.

"For over six months I have had an interior struggle with the devil; it is like a relentless war within me between the spirit of God pushing me towards good and another spirit drawing me, thrusting me towards evil.

"All these stories you have heard are only one long lie, and I wish I could attempt to tell you of my state of misery.

"I felt driven to lie from the beginning . . . I let myself be dragged further and further, often forced to speak and to act, in spite of myself.

"I have never had terrible visions of the devil, but at certain moments I feel him very close to me. It is he who made me set

fire to my underwear in spite of myself. I don't remember doing it.

"I have invented all these stories, I do not know why, and I feel more and more unhappy, I cannot speak, however much I should like to. . . .

"Yet there are a few visible, real signs of this devil's presence—odours smelt in various places, noises in church, a few other minor incidents at my friend's house. . . .

"It is only in the last few days that I have understood the gravity of the wrong I have been doing.

"What I do not understand is that in the midst of all my darkness, with God remaining hidden as my sins have deserved He should, I feel more and more called to a life of reparation. I sometimes end up by wondering if it isn't just another trick of the devil, and I feel ill; you cannot conceive how much I suffer with the headaches I have on Fridays."

This case certainly looks more complex than many others of the same kind, yet it has certain ostentatious, theatrical features which perfectly characterise the pseudo-possession of the hysterical subject; if to this is added lying, duplicity and mythomania, it will be seen that identification is easy enough. What should be noted as far more important in this case is the enlightenment offered by Ma on her own psychological state: she had been driven to lie, to invent all manner of stories and she would repent. Many hysterical people have confessed to this inner compulsion, but in their consciousness the notions of true and false, which seem to us so clear and distinct, are usually blurred as in a mist, or else are so unstable that it would be most imprudent to accept such allegations with any measure of conviction.

A last example of this kind: a nun belonging to a teaching order, inclined, from the age of eight, to morbid sexual practices and a prey to obsession and scruples, managed by force of will power to pass through the stages of the novitiate which lead to the final vows.

Towards her thirtieth year, however, the obsession of the devil began to haunt her; she could no longer bear the sight of the crucifix or of a holy image; becoming convinced that she was possessed by the evil spirit, she asked to be exorcised. In spite of the exorcism, the demonopathic phenomena continued and grew out of

all proportion. Yes, the devil was there; he lay in wait for her during the night, bound her to her bed, sometimes undressed her and left her there naked. Wishing to make an end of it, she signed a pact with the devil, writing these words on a piece of paper, with a pen dipped in her own blood: "O, Satan, my Master, I give myself to you for ever." And just as Pascal carried his touching Memorial against his heart, she wore this diabolical talisman day and night; then, seized with remorse, she went through the motions of suicide by taking several tablets of gardenal.

In this case, as in those preceding, the exorcism was vain because the question was one of psychosis and not of possession; and we must add that in such cases, where suggestibility assumes such a powerful role in the development of morbid phenomena, not only should exorcism be avoided, but also any action which might tend to maintain the idea of possession in the mind of the subject. Moreover, as Marescot recalled, the Roman Ritual commands that possession should not be too easily believed in, and he adds: "For often the over-credulous are deceived, and frequently melancholics, lunatics and those bewitched deceive the exorcist, saying that they are possessed and tormented by the devil, when in fact they are more in need of the remedies of the doctor than the ministration of the exorcist."

Besides the type of demonopathy which manifests itself in crises or trances, accompanied by a more or less complete dissolution of consciousness, we must now examine a very different species, deserving of even more attention. I have in view here what has been called the "lucid" form of possession. The expression is not a very happy one, and has too much of a flavour of the time when people spoke of "lucid madness"; I feel it is preferable to call the phenomenon in question "delirium of possession" or "demonopathic delirium".

What are the characteristics which enable us to differentiate between this form of possession and those we have already discussed? The most important one is that the patients we are now examining are not affected by attacks, crises or trances; their consciousness remains lucid in that they are fully aware of what is happening within them, bodily and spiritually, and they give minute, picturesque and singularly revealing descriptions of it.

One of the most significant examples of this state of mind is that of Father Surin, exorcist of the possessed of Loudun.¹ This priest, whose mystical life was highly developed, vital and of great sanctity, was afflicted by strange disturbances which he describes in a letter to a friend:

"I am in perpetual conversation with devils, and have had adventures which it would take too long to describe. . . . So much so that for three and a half months I have never been without a devil hovering about me. . . . The devil passes from the body of the possessed person, and, entering mine, overthrows me, agitates me and passes through me visibly, possessing me for several hours like a demoniac. It is as if I had two souls, one of which is dispossessed of its body and of the form of its members and holds itself aloof, watching the other which has usurped its place. The two spirits fight on the one battlefield, which is the body, and the soul seems to be divided."

He adds by way of postscript:

"The devil has said to me: I shall deprive you of everything and you will indeed need to keep your faith: I shall stupefy you . . . so I am obliged, in order to retain some kind of clear thought, to hold the Holy Sacrament frequently to my head, using the Key of David to open my memory."

In his work entitled *Studies in the History and Psychology of Mysticism*, Delacroix reports several other characteristics relevant to the condition of Father Surin, found in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale. It is there stated that the sufferings of the unfortunate Father Surin lasted no less than two years. "He was so worn out that he was unable to preach or carry on a conversation. He even became dumb for seven months, was incapable of dressing and undressing himself, and, finally, of making any movement whatever. He fell into an unknown illness against which all medicines were ineffectual. Several times he had impulses to commit suicide and made one serious attempt to do so. In spite of all this, his soul did not entirely lapse from attention

¹ On the case of Father Surin, see for further details the theological, historical and psychological studies of Frs. Olphe Gaillard and de Guibert, S.J.; of the Abbé Penido and of Dr. de Greeff in the *Etudes Carmélitaines* (October 1938 and April 1939).

to God; often, in the midst of his infernal torments, he was strongly moved to unite himself with Christ. . . . In his trials, he was conscious at one and the same time of despair and the desire to act in accordance with God's will."

As it was impossible at that time to analyse the nature of the psychic troubles afflicting Father Surin, he was regarded as insane and classified in the registers of his Order as mentally disordered.

Nothing could have been more judicious, and we should have extreme compassion for such unfortunates, whose incessant suffering is inexpressible and, quite often, leads them to suicide.

For many reasons, the case of Father Surin deserves close attention from any medical psychologist: the progressive nature and incurability of the illness, the general disorders which overwhelmed both mind and body, the inhibitions, impulsions, contradictions, aural hallucinations, the spoken word attributed to the devil, the sensation of a splitting of the personality, or of the mind's having been taken captive by a force stronger than that of the will, the continuous feeling of constraint—all these abnormal or unusual psychological elements have seldom been better described and analysed than by Father Surin.

It would be easy to find examples of similar cases in the literature devoted to demonopathy, but, since space is restricted, I think it better to offer a few observations on cases I myself have studied—cases answering to the type of possession we have here in mind.

I received one day a visit from a man of sixty, a retired official from some Ministry, who told me that for a considerable time he had been suffering the onslaughts of the devil, who had forced him to undergo strange affronts and who never left him, day or night; to put it briefly, he was possessed. This man had been brought up in a religious college; from his childhood he had been haunted by the problems of sex and had given himself up to solitary sexual practices, with some tendency to homosexuality. He married, however, and if he afterwards had some lapses, they were not numerous, and never homosexual. Nevertheless, he was incessantly tormented by certain obsessions, and in the effort to counter them he took refuge increasingly in prayer, in spiritual struggle and in penance. In fact, he was drawn more and more to prayer until the day came when he felt that a strange transformation had taken place within him. Everything that

happened around him became symbolical: thus the crow of a cock meant moral deliverance; dark objects and colours, dirty linen, mud, the grills of drains, dark corners in flats, cigarette ash, gravel, scrap-iron dumps, tree-trunks, the bottoms of saucepans, all these represented evil spirits; while good spirits were symbolised by gold, silver, golden frames, mirrors, anything blue, lights, brightly-coloured flowers.

However, in spite of this irrational symbolism, the man continued to lead a fairly calm life until one day when, walking near the lake in the Bois de Boulogne, he heard a voice address him in words which are quite unrepeatable. He hailed a taxi and returned home in a state of extreme anxiety: when he reached home, he said to his wife: "This time the devil is with me; I am possessed." Ever since this episode, which had taken place many years before, the evil spirit had never left him. He felt his presence unceasingly; all day long the devil spoke to him, insulted him, pursued him with the most filthy obscenities or with the most incongruous words. Often, too, the devil would defy or command him and remind him of past faults, which he called "*culpae*". One day, on the way to Ville-d'Avray, the devil threatened him with the words: "If you go any further, you are a dead man." The evil spirit not only assailed him with filthy expressions and tried to anger him by repeating his thoughts, but also brought before his eyes the most startling pictures of lust—scenes of utterly unbridled eroticism reminiscent of the temptations of Saint Anthony, but with one specific and individual feature. All these orgies, which were of an unimaginable erotic splendour, were characterised by a cynical homosexuality. The devil would also often appear to him in the shape of a hybrid monkey and wolfhound, and stand before him, jeering or threatening him, raising himself on his hind paws, putting out a red tongue at him and showing his sharp teeth. The wretched man would hurl himself in fury on this simulacrum, fling stones at it, scourge it or nail it to the pillory. Fortunately the good spirits brought their consolations to make up to him for all his sufferings. These good spirits spoke through a statue of the Virgin and through the crucifix, or else in the shape of sinuous blue snakes. The possessed man had within him two opposing influences: that of the devil, which remained dominant, and that of the good spirits to which he often appealed for help. Knowing the thousand and one tricks of the

devil, he used to make experiments and employ a series of spiritual and material means of defence: indifference to insults, irony, the recitation of a prayer, "self-exorcism", complete silence, the arranging of statues in triangles of power to oppose any demoniac intrusion. But only too often the evil spirit made short work of these fragile defences, mocked him, and made him appear ridiculous in his own eyes.

As I was curious to find out more of the origin of this demonopathic delirium, I asked my patient to write out his sad story in detail. I thus obtained the circumstantial account of his sufferings, and, above all, of the devil's plan of attack. It seemed to me very remarkable that this man, who knew nothing of psychiatry, should give me almost exactly the same formulae as those which we owe to the pioneer of the study of mental automatism, G. de Clérambault. Here, then, in our patient's own words, is the way in which the devil acts upon the mind. He works by the introspection of thought, "thought which knows itself to be thinking", which thus produces the illusion of the spirit's duality; by the involuntary recalling of memories, of words once heard—even and perhaps especially the most obscene ones; the remembrance also of past sins, of "sexual depravities"; the automatic language which passes the lips without the participation of the will; the apparent alienation of the will; involuntary exchange of speech with the devil, and the compulsion to entertain thoughts or use expressions quite outside the victim's normal habits; suggestions and intrusions into the mind of feelings of inferiority, hatred, anxiety, doubt, uncertainty, which, in their extreme state, bring about confusion; finally, the evil spirit blurs the memory of certain images or scenes, bringing instead before the mind either distorted conceptions (sensory illusions) or conceptions without an object, that is to say, auditive hallucinations, verbal, visual and cœnæsthetic psycho-motives.

In a work devoted to the study of *l'image de notre corps* I fully analysed the case of a young girl, Sybil, whose pathological history is all the more remarkable in that it extends over very long periods, and that the origin and material cause of the delirium of possession were clearly traceable. This young girl had been sent to me by an exorcist whom she had consulted. The learned priest decided that this was a pathological case and not one of genuine possession and he therefore asked me to treat her. What was her story? She



Pl. 15. Archaic Chinese *Yu* vase, representing a monster with a man in its jaws.
(Sumitomo Collection.)



Pl. 16. Archaic Chinese bronze, Chow period; mask of T'ao-T'ie (the "inchoate monster") on a tripod vase. (Loo collection, Photo. Musée Guimet.)



Pl. 17. Detail of Totonac stone carving. (After Pal Kalemén, *Mediaeval American Art*.)

was convinced that she was bewitched and under the influence of the devil, especially at night. Just as she was about to fall asleep, the devil would come to her bed, strip her of her fleshy body, "double" her and carry her double to a celestial sphere which she called "astral". There he amused himself with torturing her, wounding her with heavy blows, scourging her, flinging her into thorn bushes, or, worse still, firing revolver shots through her body, and forcing her to endure the most terrible humiliations. The poor girl would try to defend herself against this appalling power: she attempted to regain possession of the "double" from which she had been torn away. She would beg the devil to give it back to her, and her struggle and entreaties always lasted a long time, until she was quite worn out, when the devil at last consented to give her back the body which he had taken from her. Curiously enough, this "double" was not always given back whole; sometimes it was restored to her bit by bit, with an arm missing, or a leg, and only after a violent struggle did she regain complete possession of her body. Sometimes, worn out with pleading with her tyrant, she would rise from her bed, but as she felt herself to be lacking her body, she would stumble, her legs would give way, and she would fall to the floor. On these occasions Sybil was sometimes capable of observing what was happening around her, and was struck by strange phenomena; objects were moving and bending, and she seemed able to understand the alarm-clock's rhythmical language.

She was seized by violent compulsions and inhibitions quite opposed to the action of her will; she became the victim of aural and visual hallucinations; but more often even than this, she was able to understand what the devil thought merely by seeing him torture her "double".

Like Father Surin and every other sufferer from the delirium of possession, Sybil used what she thought were the most effectual means of defence against the devil; thus she sprinkled her bed with holy water, always put her rosary round her neck and, following an old superstition, often burnt a few lumps of sugar at the foot of her bed. But unfortunately these defences nearly always proved insufficient or completely ineffectual. Her state grew progressively worse and any form of life with other people became impossible, so that she had to be placed in a psychiatric hospital where she fell seriously ill.

Before reaching that stage, however, Sybil had, to all appearances, remained quite reasonable in her daily life; she lived with her father and for many years looked after the house without provoking any serious criticism by her conduct. She was reserved and pious and never fell into any of the sins of the flesh; it was only during her trances that she imagined that the devil defiled her by indulging with great violence in acts whose nature can easily be guessed. In most such cases it is impossible to discover, apart from hereditary defects, the origin of this delirium; but with Sybil the cause of the illness turned out to be quite evident. At the age of twelve she had suffered from epidemic encephalitis lethargica and had spent many months in hospital in Paris. We know today the remote consequences that can follow this illness, and the cause of the demonopathic delirium is in this case clear.

Let us now turn to another case related to the last. Here the patient was a young girl of very good family, who had received a most careful education. She was sent to me by the Mother Superior of a religious community which she had greatly desired to enter; but her somewhat strange manner was a barrier to her being admitted.

I questioned this young girl, and when I had won her confidence she told me about her life, her enthusiasms and discouragements, her anxieties and hopes.

"Ever since my childhood," she said, "I have every now and then had the impression of being in another world and of knowing God, the Father of Jesus Christ; while I was still a little girl I had sublime revelations, and even supernatural visions. One day, for instance, I saw the ceiling open and a cloud rend before my eyes; then God spoke to me in my heart."

Here the case is obviously one of "pseudo-hallucination", or psychic hallucinations accompanied by an acute feeling of presence.

Sometimes, also, she felt a soft breath touch her from the left; this, she said, was "like an infusion of God". Later she heard "in her thought" God telling her: "We shall come near you to make our dwelling-place." Finally, under the influence of this constant feeling of the Divine which seemed to penetrate her, she became convinced that she was soon to receive an order to carry out a spiritual mission on earth, and began to question herself and to seek in external things signs and revelations of this mission.

All the time these strange phenomena were taking place, the girl was going through great physical suffering: at one time it would take the form of overpowering weakness; at another she would feel a pain in the back of the neck which "brought a host of thoughts"; or she would feel various visceral pains, such as characterise what is called "*hypochondria dolorosa*". But what troubled her most was the feeling that the devil was incessantly prowling round her; indeed she felt as if she were being crushed between two opposing forces, one divine and the other diabolical. She was never affected by actual visual hallucinations, but on several occasions it seemed to her that the devil threw himself on her, pressing her on the left side, the side of the heart, and this phenomenon, which took place at night, deeply troubled her. When she was asked to give her interpretation of this strange happening she replied that the devil wished to mimic the mystical union which she had already been granted.

On the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception the devil visited her as she lay on her bed. "It was," she told us, "like a great dragon swooping down upon me; I did not see him, but I felt him perfectly well"; and "if the devil relentlessly pursues me," she continued, "it is because I have practised much asceticism, and he wants to make me stumble in the ways of the Lord, for it is written in Ecclesiastes: 'My son, if you will undertake to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for trial'."

I was able to follow this patient's progress for five years and her state never perceptibly improved. Here again, we find in her the feeling of seizure or "exterior action", as Henri Claude put it, increased by tactile and aural cœnæsthetic hallucinations, and an unwavering belief in two opposed forces, each attempting to dominate the other: God and the devil.

If we have spent some time on cases of "lucid possession" or demonopathic delirium, it is because, for the psychologist, they contain many instructive features and, moreover, provide the clearest distinguishing marks of false, as against authentic, demoniacal possession.

Do we not find in these patients all the signs of an invasion by a personality alien to their ego—a personality which reveals itself by compulsions, forced actions, inhibitions, by sounds heard perfectly clearly, distinctly and frequently, by numerous sensory and psychic hallucinations, and by ineffable sensations of an

influence present within or around them? The essence of this influence remains a mystery until the day when the patient becomes convinced, during one of these attacks of delirium, that it is indeed an evil spirit who directs his actions, induces his feelings and ideas, in fact who possesses him and holds him at his mercy.

Now this delirium, which is based on the division of the personality, is found in persons who do not pretend to demonopathic possession, but who suffer from the more common kinds of persecution mania, so often met with in psychiatric hospitals.

In both categories of sufferer, the most important feature is the feeling of a foreign influence which has entered their personality and dominates it—an influence evil in that it expresses the opposite of the image they have of themselves. They react against this influence by all possible means, including those of the subconscious; and it is precisely by these disguised, roundabout ways that many of our patients unwittingly create a second favourable personality which is opposed to the evil influence and fights against it, keeping the poor patients in a state of painful struggle between an influence which they consider pernicious and an influence easily attributed to the divine or to some other occult power. This rending asunder of the consciousness sometimes leads to the most disastrous consequences, even to self-destruction.

Finally, we must observe that if psycho-analysis frequently brings to light some sexual disorder in patients suffering from demonopathy, it is because in their eyes the greatest sin lies in carnal failings or perversions, the most serious of which is homosexuality.

But this obsession with sin, which rarely leaves the person it has once gripped, also appears as a force invested with a living personality. This is due to a tendency inborn in man, which Napoleon was thinking of when he said: "The greatest power bestowed on man is that of giving to things a soul which they do not possess." The patients we have been considering, following the natural trend of their minds, proceed to identify the devil with the sin from which they feel the most aversion and which they most deeply dread.

So, from the very beginning of the psychopathy, we may find a tendency to a pathological interpretation of things, which can but develop and increase, giving a very significant colour to the mental disorder. In some demonopathic subjects I have observed, the

interpretative capacity was so active that every single perception became a source of very diverse interpretations or symbolisations, often most unexpected and extravagant. To recall only one example, our retired official, thinking himself to be directly persecuted by the devil, transformed every object of the external world into either a symbol of joy, of resistance to the evil spirit, or, on the contrary, into a diabolical manifestation. All his psychological activity, which was great, was thus almost wholly used up in the creation of a symbolic world whose elements he tried to unite into some kind of general harmony, in order to obtain at least temporary spiritual rest.

As we pointed out before, it is as yet impossible to state precisely what are the deepest causes underlying this type of psychosis of influence, or demonopathic persecution. No doubt the patient's original constitution plays a large part, but this is not the whole solution; and if we refuse to admit the thesis of a mental automatism conditioned by some capricious stimulation of the cerebral cortex, then the predictable evolution of the causal process entitles us to believe that a functional psycho-physiological disorder is at the source of this psychopathy, and that by countering it we shall, perhaps, be able to deliver our patients from their indescribable sufferings.

What are we to conclude from this account? Surely this, that there exist genuine psychopathic states whose chief symptom is the notion that the moral or physical personality, or perhaps the entire personality, is possessed by the devil. These states may be divided into two quite distinct types: the first is marked by the brutal, catastrophic occurrence of possession, which takes place during trances or severe crises, when the consciousness is in a state of more or less complete dissolution; the second is more complex, and consists of a strictly predetermined psychosis, whose development can be foreseen, and of which a very grave prognosis can be made.

JEAN LHERMITTE

THE CHURCH AND WITCHCRAFT

THAT SUCH a thing as witchcraft exists or has existed in the world no Christian can deny who believes his Bible to be the inspired Word of God. It is impossible to suppose that the story of the witch of Endor (1 Kings xxviii), of Simon Magus (Acts viii. 9) or of the girl with the pythonical spirit (Acts xvi. 16) are to be understood merely as allegories. Moreover, the reality of demoniacal possession which the Gospels assume seems to imply that the devil may not only make himself master of the body and the faculties of men, but also, if he pleases, communicate with them in some sensible way. Neither need we fear to say that Satan's interference in human affairs was probably more immediate and more undisguised in former ages than in the present. His tactics must be expected to change as the tone of men's minds changes. At an epoch when the belief in God was too firmly rooted to be assailed with any hope of success, it may have suited the devil's purpose best to inflame the passions of malignity, cruelty and lust by the arts and illusions of witchcraft. In our own day, when faith is fast decaying and the greed of knowledge is keen, it may pay him better to foster such vague cults as Theosophy and Spiritualism, both of them in practice involving the rejection of all revelation. Bearing these principles in mind, we shall hesitate to maintain that there has *never* been any foundation for the accusations made against reputed witches, just as it is difficult to believe that the incriminating details confessed by the accused have always been elicited by fear of torture. Even where all has been imposture and delusion, the witches seem sometimes to have deluded themselves as well as their clients. None the less, while we admit the possible existence of really diabolical practices, it is quite certain that the vast majority of the lives sacrificed were those of innocent victims hunted down in a blind panic of hatred or terror. The injunction of the Old Law: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exod. xxii. 18), while it may palliate, cannot be held to warrant the atrocities sanctioned by

ecclesiastical and civil judges alike in almost every country of Europe.

But while no Catholic can wish to extenuate the horrors of the witch mania as it existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is worth while to point out that there has probably been a certain amount of exaggeration in the statements of those who have written upon the subject, particularly in the estimates of numbers. The figures which are to be found in popular encyclopaedias are absolutely unreliable, being merely guesses founded upon no better historical data than the writer's inner consciousness. The records of witch trials, even where any records were kept or forms of law observed, have in many cases perished or else remain still buried beneath the dust of centuries. On the other hand, the idle stories of mere newsmongers, printed in chap-books or inserted as gossip in the letters of the time, have too often been accepted as evidence in their place, and have been made the foundation of the most preposterous inferences. I may venture to quote in illustration a particular instance that I stumbled upon in 1895. In the year 1606 there was hawked about the streets of Paris a chap-book with this title: *A truthful relation of the execution done upon fifty wizards and witches put to death in the town of Douai. . . . At Paris, according to the copy printed at Mons in Hainault: 1616.*¹

Now a local antiquary of Douai has made it clear, with all the authority that belongs to a student intimately familiar with the records of his township, that this wonderful story is from beginning to end a pure fabrication. There was no wholesale execution of witches at Douai, and there was no account of it printed at Mons in Hainault, but the fiction originated for the first time in Paris. We must not forget that the townsfolk of the seventeenth century were in some ways just as keen after sensational literature as the British public in our own. At present our journals are restrained from giving full scope to their inventive genius in the fabrication of news by the consciousness that every rival publication contains the implicit exposure of their own mendacity, and

¹ *Discours Véritable de l'Exécution faite de cinquante tant Sorciers que Sorcières, exécutés en la Ville de Douay . . . A Paris . . . juxta la copie imprimée à Mons en Hainault* MDCVI. See an article in the *Souvenirs de la France Wallonne*, 2nd series, vol. ii, p. 177 (1882), where the writer shows that not only is all trace of such an occurrence wanting in the town records of Douai but also that the details given concerning the accused and their place of residence are entirely incompatible with their being tried and executed in that city.

that a very brief course of fictitious intelligence entails the loss of present confidence and future circulation. In the seventeenth century these checks hardly existed, and the details of marvellous occurrences attested only by chap-book literature must be accepted with the greatest caution. Another consideration not to be left out of account and tending to throw suspicion on the stories of the destruction of witches by fifties and hundreds at a time is the question of expense. In the same town of Douai we have a full record preserved in the public archives of the trial of three witches before the civil magistrates in 1599.¹ Two of these were burnt and the third banished. The expenditure for the whole process is set down in the minutest detail, including the payments made to all concerned in the affair—honorariums to the professors of the university for their opinion upon a point of law, compensation to magistrates and witnesses for loss of time, fees to the executioner and his assistants, sums spent in food and drink, and faggots for the burning, the whole ending in a dinner provided for the magistrates and officials, which was also partaken of by the executioner and his wife. The whole process cost more than 1,000 livres, the equivalent probably of some £1,500 at the present day. It is obvious that witch trials on this scale of expenditure could not be of everyday occurrence. I am disposed, therefore, to maintain that the only evidence which can be safely accepted for the number of those who suffered is the record of official documents or the testimony of eye-witnesses. If this rule were insisted upon, the estimates now current both for Catholic and Protestant countries alike would have to be considerably reduced.²

We come now to the share of the Popes in the persecution of witches. It has sometimes been represented that the Bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* of Innocent VIII, issued in 1484, is to be regarded as the source both of the popular belief in witchcraft and of the severities used in suppressing it. This, as Soldan and Heppe³ allow, is entirely erroneous. Witchcraft has existed in

¹ *Souvenirs de la France Wallonne*, 1st series, vol. ix, pp. 35-62.

² [The importance of this question of expense may be seen from the claim which Matthew Hopkins, the Puritan lawyer and Witch-finder General, made in his *Discovery of Witches* (1647): "He demands but 20s. a town and doth sometimes ride 20 miles for that, and hath no more for all his charges thither and back again." If a town had to pay heavily for finding the witch, as well as the expenses of the trial, the professional witch-finder would not have great employment.]

³ [W. G. SOLDAN and H. HEPPE, *Geschichte der Hexen-Processe*, 2 vols.: edited by M. Bauer (1912). The Bull is discussed in vol. i, pp. 270-80. It spoke of immoralities

every age and country, and the pagan classics alone would suffice to prove that the hatred of the witch has been as universal as the faith in her ability to do mischief. While paganism still survived, the Church, we find, often used her influence to discourage converts from believing too much in witchcraft. At the close of the tenth century Bishop Burchard of Worms¹ drew up a sort of form of examination of conscience, founded on the still older *Canon Episcopi*, in which the penitent was asked such questions as these: "Hast thou ever believed that there are women who have the power of raising tempests by their incantations, or changing the disposition of men's hearts—altering love into hate and hate into love—of injuring or stealing away their possessions? Hast thou believed that these women ride out at night-time with the pretended goddess Holda and with a company of other women and animals?" If the penitent answered in the affirmative, he was to be duly penanced.

Still the principle was always maintained that sorcery and the pretence of it were evils to be sternly repressed, and in our own country, under Edward the Elder in 905 and under Cnut in 1033, we find laws which recognise it as a crime to be punished by banishment or death.² A considerable number of processes against witches are recorded in most European states in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and from the early days of the Inquisition that tribunal claimed jurisdiction in such cases of witchcraft as constituting a particular form of heresy. The main purport of the Bull of Innocent VIII was to decide this conflict of jurisdiction, the Pope pronouncing in favour of the Inquisition and against the civil magistrates.³ At the same time he

practised by witches and of curses laid upon men, cattle, crops and vineyards, but not of the witches' Sabbath or of changelings.]

¹ [Burchard was Bishop of Worms from 1000 to 1025. He deals with witchcraft at least three times in his collection of *Decreta* (Migne, P. L. 140, 576, and 837, also 961). The first two passages are taken verbatim from an earlier canonical work of Regino of Prüm, compiled in 906 (P. L. 132, 284), which incorporated a ninth-century *Canon Episcopi*. The third passage of Burchard is more elaborate and runs thus: "Hast thou believed that there are women who do what some, deluded by the devil, say they must do under most compelling precept, namely, ride out at night-time in a mob of devils, which common folly calls "holda", the devils being transformed into the likeness of women and mounted upon beasts, and these people being themselves counted in their number? If thou hast entertained such vain belief, penance of one year must thou do."]

² WILKINS, *Concilia*, i, pp. 204 and 306.

³ The Protestant authorities, Soldan and Heppel, remark that the chief historical importance of the Bull lies precisely in the papal assumption of a right to interfere in the determination of questions of legal jurisdiction within the empire.

undoubtedly speaks strongly about the prevalence of witchcraft "in the parts of Upper Germany"—a question of fact as to which the Pontiff was obviously at the mercy of his informers—and it was the occasion of an outburst of persecution in those regions which sent many miserable victims to the stake. The most permanent result of the Bull was the drawing up of the treatise called *Malleus Maleficarum* by the Inquisitors Krämer and Sprenger, to whom the Bull was directed, this book serving for many years as the standard of procedure in the civil and ecclesiastical courts.¹

With regard, however, to the main object of the Bull, the question of jurisdiction, it is highly important to notice that it produced no important results. The prosecutions for witchcraft did *not* remain in the hands of the Inquisitors, but in nearly all the states of Europe except the Spanish peninsula they reverted to the secular courts. It was under these civil magistrates, who, to the blind fury of what was little better than lynch law, added only the indescribable horrors of the torture chamber, that the greatest excesses were committed.² The procedure of the Inquisition would at least have supplied some forms of justice, it would have done something to secure the observance of certain checks and safeguards provided even by the civil code. But, as it was, under the influence of hatred or terror, these were persistently disregarded. The *Carolina* for instance, the penal code framed at Ratisbon under Charles V, required that leading questions should not be put to witches when under torture; it also decided that the death penalty should not be inflicted except when notable harm was proved to have resulted from their incantations. In practice the interrogations under torture were expressly directed to the one end of obtaining "confessions" and it became an avowed principle that the attempt to use witchcraft was to be punished by death *effectu non secuto*—even though no effect followed.³

¹ [Krämer is often called Institoris, this being the Latinised form of his name which was more generally used in Renaissance times. The Bull was directed more especially to the Bishop of Strasburg, enjoining upon him the duty of giving the Inquisitors all facilities. A few years later George Golser, Bishop of Brixen and a friend of Nicholas of Cusa, was so little impressed by the proceedings of Institoris at Innsbruck that he expelled him from the diocese.]

² That the process of the Inquisition must have been a benefit to the accused, at least in some regions, appears from a law of Charles VIII that sorcerers were to be roasted and burnt "without any other form of procedure" (*Archives Historiques du Nord*, 3rd series, vol. i, p. 279).

³ JANSSEN, *History of the German People* (English translation by A. M. Christie, 1910), vol. xvi, pp. 292-6.

How little there was in this witch-persecution to connect it distinctively with the papacy or the Catholic Church may be judged from the fact that the Protestant states, which would have nothing to say even to Gregory XIII's urgently needed reform of the Calendar, simply because it came from Rome, were foremost in employing torture and fire in the extirpation of witches.¹ It is difficult to pronounce as to the relative degree of barbarity displayed among Catholics or Protestants when there is such a dearth of authentic records, but to judge by those which have been published for the cities of Central Europe the Reformers seem to have been more keen and cruel in the pursuit than the adherents of the ancient faith.² It would serve no good purpose to attempt to give a catalogue of the atrocities almost everywhere witnessed or to discuss the truth of the more extravagant allegations made on either side. It is said that the Protestant jurist Carpzovius affixed his signature to 20,000 death-warrants, but this statement has probably no serious foundation. I am also very doubtful about the alleged facts that 133 witches were burnt in the little town of Quedlingburg in the course of one year (1589), and that 300 perished in Westerstretten, near Ellwangen, in the two years 1613-14.³ It is certain, however, that the witch-mania nowhere raged more fiercely than in Calvinist Scotland, and our own James I, the monarch who received perhaps more adulation as the incarnation of justice, humanity and enlightenment than any king who ever lived, was himself the instigator and the eye-witness of the torments of many of these miserable sufferers.

¹ [In Denmark and in Transylvania it was certainly not until the introduction of Protestantism that witch-burnings began. Peder Palladius, who was Bishop of the Danish church under King Christian III, wrote in 1540: "These creatures must receive their merited reward. In these days that are enlightened by the pure evangel they cannot any longer keep going. They will now be disgraced before the world." It is perhaps due to papal influence that Denmark had been thus far free of witch-hunting. The letter of Hildebrand in 1080 to King Haakon would no doubt count for much in Denmark. In this letter Pope Gregory VII told the king that women accused of weather-magic and spells were not guilty, and that to attempt to punish them was foolish and would provoke the anger of God (CASPAR, *Das Register Gregors VII* (Berlin, 1920), p. 498).]

² JANSSEN, *History of the German People*, xvi, pp. 297-8.

³ [These figures are given in JANSSEN, *ibid.*, xvi, pp. 424 and 506. Fr. Thurston had consulted the sources cited by Janssen and notes that he thinks that Janssen makes the figures larger than his sources warrant. In the case of Westerstetten the figures are taken from the *Litterae annuae* of the Society of Jesus and are based on reports of the Fathers who attended the witches at their execution, a work which won the Society much ill-fame at the time and many accusations of witchcraft. No doubt the good Fathers' statistics sometimes overlapped and led to exaggerations such as occurred with the counting of planes destroyed in the Battle of Britain.]

In the face of this almost universal blindness and brutality, it is instructive to notice where the exceptions lie. While Catholic and Protestant states seem at the first glance to be tarred pretty evenly with nearly the same brush, a closer inspection reveals a not unimportant distinction. Amongst the Reformers the initiative in the witch persecution comes from their religious leaders. Amongst the Catholics the movement originates for the most part in the blind fears of the ignorant mob or in the malice of men who care nothing for religion—the excesses not being due to the Church as a Church. It is no doubt hard to prove such a thesis by evidence which is perfectly conclusive. It is impossible to attempt it in the narrow limits at my disposal here. Still, a few indications may be given.

If the mainspring of the persecution of witches had been the action of the Popes, we should expect to find that in Rome, in the city in which their authority was unfettered by any external interference, the crusade would have been carried on with the most relentless cruelty. As a matter of fact, the very opposite is the case. Though it may not be quite true to say that no witch was ever burned alive there, it is certain and generally admitted that Rome was in advance of every other city in Europe in this respect.¹ Another exception is that which is often called the most priest-ridden country in the world. Mr. Lecky has borne witness to Ireland's singular freedom from the witch-mania, declaring that "more persons have perished on that ground in a single year in England and Scotland than in the whole recorded history of Ireland".² But I prefer to cite here the words of a writer in the *Dublin University Magazine*, a journal which will not be suspected of sympathy with Rome: "It is a curious fact that from this belief in witchcraft Ireland, though generally regarded as a superstitious country, and deservedly so as far as regards banshees, ghosts and fairies, has been all along comparatively free."³

As with countries, so with individuals. Those sons of the Church who have won the veneration of their fellow-men for the true

¹ [One witch was burnt in Rome on 28th June 1424, as is related in the *Diarium* of Infessura (MURATORI, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, iii, 2, p. 1123). This burning took place soon after the return of Martin V, which brought the Avignon period to an end, and on the occasion of the preaching of St. Bernadine of Siena. PASTOR, *History of the Popes*, i, p. 233, gives an account of the affair which shows its singularity in a clear light.]

² *History of England*, vol. ii, p. 392.

³ August 1873, p. 219.

holiness of their lives, canonised saints like St. Philip Neri, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Vincent of Paul, St. Francis of Sales, although they have enjoyed influence enough to reform whole cities and peoples, yet they have never used that influence to try to overthrow the empire of Satan by making hecatombs of witches. It was otherwise with the leaders among the Reformers, with Calvin and Luther, Melanchthon and John Knox. The first Act of Parliament visiting witchcraft with the penalty of death in Scotland was passed in 1563 at the express instigation of John Knox, and more than one victim suffered that very year.¹ James Melvill, Knox's devoted admirer, tells us that the first execution he ever witnessed was that of a witch at St. Andrews: "against the quhilk Mr. Knox—that maist notable servant of God—dealt from the pulpit, she being set up at a pillar before him."² Twenty-five years later Knox's immediate followers were busy throughout the kingdom in organising witch-hunts under the personal superintendence of His Most Sacred Majesty King James VI.

As for Calvin, we find Protestant writers who frankly avow that the criminal code drawn up at Geneva under his inspiration was more truly written in blood than the laws of Draco. Between 17th February and 15th May 1545 thirty-four executions took place in Geneva, a large number of the victims being witches. The Reformer even makes it a reproach against the Papacy that Catholics were too slack in carrying on the persecution. Most curious of all, we find that certain offenders were condemned by this Father of Protestantism to be "immured". A decree of the Council dated 2nd April 1545 records: "It is ordered that they (proscribed citizens returning from banishment) shall be immured, and shall not be taken out until they have confessed the truth, otherwise they shall end their days in this torment."³

But how, it may be asked, does the cruelty of Calvin and Knox

¹ See JOHN HILL BURTON, *History of Scotland*, vol. iv, p. 72. This apologist for Knox freely admits the fact.

² *Diary of James Melvill*, p. 58.

³ [KAMPSCHULTE gives the text in his *Johann Calvin*, pp. 424-7. The operative words are: "Ordonné qu'ils soient murés et ne soient otés de là jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient confessé la vérité, autrement finiront leurs jours à tel tourment." Fr. Thurston was very much struck by this discovery of "walling-up" among the Calvinists. He had devoted much energy to exposing the ridiculous tales of nuns being bricked up in living tombs which Rider Haggard had ventured to introduce into one of his novels. It would seem that "walling-up" meant no more than solitary confinement, continued for a long period. What anchoresses had begun as a voluntary seclusion

differ from the share taken in this persecution by Popes like Innocent VIII? There is, I reply, the great difference that Calvin and Knox were themselves the instigators and the witnesses of the torturing and the burning of witches; Innocent VIII was legislating for a distant people in the, to him, barbarous North. Believing, as the Holy Scripture taught him, the possibility of witchcraft, he probably had no difficulty in crediting that in these wild countries sorcery was a powerful and active agency calling for severe measures of repression. Many a sensible man at the present day who would scoff at anything like *diablerie* here in England believes such a thing to be not incredible when it is a question of India or Africa or San Domingo. As for the barbarous means employed, they were only those common to all the civil courts of Europe both at that epoch and long afterwards.¹

I had intended to say something of the men who, during long years, struggled to dispel this dark cloud of witch-persecution, this plague-spot upon the face of Christian Europe. I have only space to say that they were not philosophers or statesmen, or the founders of new religions. The most illustrious of them all, according to the impartial testimony of the Protestant Leibnitz, was a holy Jesuit priest, Fr. Friedrich Spee.²

and a withdrawal from the world was taken up as an enforced punishment by the powers, civil and ecclesiastical, of the later Middle Ages, who saw their milder punishments losing their sting.]

¹ [It might also be urged that the Popes differed from Calvin and Knox in their attitude to the Old Testament. For various doctrinal and polemical reasons the Reformers made more of the Old Testament than of the New. The commands of Exodus and Leviticus were to be observed to the letter. Hence the urge to do witches to death, an urge which was not felt by the followers of the traditional view, where the Old Testament was seen to be valuable chiefly for the hints and foreshadowings it gave of the New. It is notable that a recent study of witchcraft in the Duchy of Lorraine from 1585 to 1640 by M. ETIENNE DELCAMBRE, archivist of the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle (*Le concept de sorcellerie dans le Duché de Lorraine au XVI^e et au XVII^e siècle*, vol. i: Nancy, 1948) makes the main cause of the epidemic to be false ideas of mystical theology rather than any survival or recrudescence of pagan practice.]

² [Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld (1591-1635), who died when at the height of his powers as a poet and a moral theologian, through disease contracted by his attendance on soldiers wounded in the Thirty Years War, was a pioneer in the campaign for bettering the lot of those accused of witchcraft. His *Cautio criminalis*, based not only on the principles of moral theology but also on his experience gained by visiting witches in prison and ministering to them the comforts of religion, attacked the use of torture in the examination of those accused of witchcraft. He was once set upon by Reformers when on his way to preach in a village and nearly beaten to death. He escaped from them, had his wounds dressed and appeared in the church with bandaged head to preach on the text: "The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling." In one of his poems he said that he would leave behind him a song in praise of God.]

When we calmly review the data of this intricate problem of witchcraft and witch-persecution, the only sane conclusion seems to be that nine-tenths, perhaps ninety-nine hundredths, of the trouble was due to the morbid and hysterical mental conditions engendered among a number of superstitious and very imperfectly educated people by an atmosphere of suspicion, terror and mystery. No doubt there were here and there persons of intelligence, like Gilles de Rais for example, who believed in these things, and who for mercenary or evil ends did deliberately seek to put themselves in communication with the spirit of all evil, and who, having become desperate, stopped short at no kind of crime, blasphemy, or sacrilege. But the immense majority had probably been guilty of little more than a curious or sometimes malicious dabbling in the occult and dangerous. Wherever persecution and a great sensation occurred and set all the world a-talking, witches began to be manufactured and to multiply, until the judges, Protestant and Catholic alike, found they dared not proceed further and follow up all the supposed clues.¹

HERBERT THURSTON, S.J.,

with additional notes by J. H. CREHAN, S.J.

"Es werden's andere singen
Bin ich gleich längst dahin."

In a way that he did not suspect, his words have proved true. The account of him given by BERNHARD DUHR (*Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, ii, 2, pp. 745-66, Freiburg, 1913), is perhaps the most accessible, though several lives of him have been published in Germany, the latest being by W. Kosch in 1921.]

¹ [The avidity of the accused to confess to all (and more than) they all were accused of is not a phenomenon confined to our own days. Agobard of Lyons in the early ninth century notes that after a cattle-plague Grimoaldus, the Count of Beneventum, was said to have sent out men with a black powder which they were to scatter upon the cattle of the Christian Emperor. Many of those arrested on suspicion confessed that they had had this powder and had scattered it. Agobard remarks that the thing was so absurd that even if all the men and women of Beneventum had gone out with three cart-loads apiece of the powder, there would not have been enough to account for the plague, and yet even the prospect of death did not shake these miserable creatures in their confession of guilt. "Tanta iam stultitia oppressit mundum, ut nunc sic absurde res credantur a Christianis quales nunquam antea quisquam ad credendum poterat suadere paganis creatorem omnium ignorantibus" (AGOBARD, *Liber contra insulsam vulgi opinionem de grandine et tonitruis*, xvi: in Migne, P. L. 104, 158).]

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND SATANISM

THE DAWN of the modern era saw another dawn—the dawn of the false empire of Satan in a Europe gripped by religious and moral crisis and a prey to social unrest and political insecurity.¹ For more than a century Satan was to lead the intelligence captive, harass the human will and begot the spirit, so as to draw after him a multitude of the faithful and harness them to his yoke, sometimes even leading them to a horrible death by fire. He was to have a cult, with its initiated, its ministers, its high priests, so that the house of his religion was to be in the very centre of Christianity. This cult would be neither heresy nor superstition, but rather a topsy-turvydom of dogma.²

There are many reasons for this, among which must be listed that anti-feminism which doubtless arose more from a real social

¹ The bibliography of the subject is immense. We shall here merely refer *en bloc* to the works listed by H. PIRENNE, A. RENAUDET, E. PERROY, M. HANDELSMAN and L. HALPHEN: *La fin du M.A.* (Coll. *Peuples et Civilisations*, ed. L. Halphen and P. Sagnac) (Paris, 1931). H. PIRENNE, G. COHEN and H. FOCILLON, *La Civilisation occidentale au M.A.* (Coll. *Histoire Générale*, ed. G. Glotz and R. Cohen) (Paris, 1933). J. CALMETTE and E. DEPREZ, *L'Europe occidentale de la fin du XIV^e siècle aux guerres d'Italie* (same series), 2 vols. (Paris, 1937 and 1939). G. SCHNUEBER, *L'Eglise et la civilisation au M.A.*, vol. iii (Paris, 1938). See also the summaries of late mediaeval political theory, of magic, sorcery and kindred sciences, of instruction, of the arts and ideas of Renaissance Europe, in *The Cambridge Mediaeval History*, vol. viii (Cambridge, 1936). Several volumes dealing with the questions here raised are announced as forthcoming in the collection *L'Evolution de l'Humanité*, ed. Berr. These questions are also to be treated in vols. xv and xvi of *L'Histoire de l'Eglise* (ed. A. Fliche and V. Martin). As foundation works for the study of Satanism, we may cite: HANSEN, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Hexenwahn und der Hexenverfolgung in Mittelalter* (Bonn, 1901), and his *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der grossen Hexenverfolgung* (Munich, 1911); MURRAY, *The Witchcult in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1921); SUMMERS, *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (London, 1926); PAULUS, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1910); SOLDAN-HEPPE-BAUER, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1911).

² Sorcery was sometimes classed as superstition, but more often as heresy. For SPRENGER and INSTITORIS (*Malleus*, fo 5), the sorcerer is a heretic. For THOMAS STAPLETON, magic is the soil of heresy, and heresy of magic (SUMMERS, *op. cit.*, p. 46). According to DE LANCRE (*Tableau . . .*, p. 539), "sorcery can scarcely exist without heresy". ZYPAEUS, on the contrary, distinguishes between sorcerers and heretics (*Noticia juris belgici*, (Antwerp 1635), pp. 200-12). TINTORIS considers sorcery as more gravely sinful than heresy for these reasons: (1) heretics honour God, at least with their lips, while sorcerers deny God; (2) heretics have no communication with the devil as sorcerers have; (3) heretics have been misled, but sorcerers act through perverseness. (HANSEN, *Quellen . . .*, 184-8).

state of affairs than from any literary slant or religious prejudice; a certain bewilderment in society due to the passing away of landed wealth, and the growth of a new type of riches from commerce; the moral decadence of the Church, arraigned in an abundant anticlerical pamphlet-literature. To this must be added the ignorance of the masses in religious matters, and an illiteracy that was almost universal among them and which extended often to their pastors.¹ Their confusion is seen in the multiplication of sects.² An élite alone escaped the general chaos, and their will to reform was the way that led to the Council of Trent. In their bewilderment, some looked for a new prophet, and hailed him in Luther; others turned to superstitions which thrived as never before.³

The educated classes of society did not escape the prevalent preoccupation with Satan. Art, literature and science do not ignore the leading questions of the moment, but find in them their source of inspiration, their favourite subjects or the justification of their research. Contemporary culture was, therefore,

¹ Even apart from their being victims of pastoral negligence, the people, especially those of rural communities, had no opportunity of acquiring more than a rudimentary knowledge of their religion. In most cases, their illiteracy necessitated purely verbal teaching. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century the Great Catechism of Canisius was in circulation. Its reputation grew, and its use was even made obligatory in 1557 by an edict of Philip II. In this work, the presentation of the doctrine stressed the part played by the demons in warring against God, and named them as the cause of all the evils of this life and of the next. This was a concession to the over-simplified doctrine of a popular manichaeism. DIEFFENBACH remarks (*Der Zauberglaube der XVI^{ten} Jahrhunderts nach den Katechismen Dr. Martin Luthers und des P. Canisius* (Mayence, 1900) p. 7) that the name of Satan appears sixty-seven times while that of Christ occurs sixty-three times. On the question of catechisms, see also CANON HÉZARD, *Histoire du Catéchisme depuis la naissance de l'Église jusqu'au Concordat* (Paris, 1900); MALOTAUX, *Histoire du catéchisme dans les Pays-Bas* (Renaix, 1906).

² Consider the success of theologically inconsistent heresies such as that of the "Hommes de l'Intelligence" or that of the original Anabaptists. Consider, too, the success of simple preachers, such as that enjoyed at Tournai and Namur by Nicholas Serrurier, who was later to be condemned by the Council of Constance; in the Cambrai region, by Thomas Connecte, who was later burned at Rome; or at Malines by Jean Pupper van Goth, who was a Quietist. The fascination, sometimes very great and always short-lived, which these so-called reformers held for the masses, is a significant sign of the religious restlessness of the period.

³ There is a long list of general works devoted to the study of superstitions. One can form some idea of these "erring beliefs" by consulting J.-B. THIERS, *Traité des superstitions* (Paris, 1679); P. LE BRUN, *Histoire critique des pratiques superstitieuses*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1733-6); BÉRANGER, *Superstitions et survivances*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1896); COROIEU, *Las supersticiones de la humanidad*, 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1880-1); LEHMANN, *Aberglaube und Zauberei* (Stuttgart, 1898); HOFFMANN-KRAGER, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1927-42). The Church had attempted to stem these encroachments by multiplying blessings on the harvest, on the sick, on child-birth, etc. See FIANZ, *Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen in Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1909).

compelled to define its attitude towards the problem of Satan. This attitude will be examined in the first part of this study, and we shall see how it altered in the course of a century and a half. In the second part of this article, we shall examine anti-Satanic legislation, especially in its application to the Netherlands and the principality of Liège. We must treat of legislation as the indispensable complement of culture, for culture and legislation are reciprocal in their action and are therefore inseparable.

Woman was the chief victim of satanism. Indeed, one of the principal causes of satanism was the anti-feminism of the times.¹ Literature, always a mirror to the manners of an age, bears witness to this.²

Theological uneasiness about woman is not confined to the end

¹ As clearly shown in N. PAULUS, op. cit., pp. 195-247. For a special treatment of Germany, see BUECHER, *Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1910), with numerous references to sources. In an excellent introduction to the works of Rabelais, A. Lefranc has condensed in a few pages the attitude of Rabelais' time to this question. Mention must also be made of the works of G. REYNIER, *Le Roman sentimental avant l'Astrée* (Paris, 1908), and *La femme au XVII^e siècle, ses ennemis, ses défenseurs* (Paris, 1933). There were many editions of the Arthurian romance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and sufficient readers to warrant a school of admirers and imitators. The *chansons de geste* were rewritten in prose to suit the taste of the age. See BESCH, "Les adaptations en prose des chansons de geste aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles," *Revue du XVI^e siècle*, vol. iii (1915), pp. 155-81; TILLEY, "Les romans de chevalerie en prose," in the same review, vol. vi (1919), pp. 45-63; R. BOSSUAT, in J. CALVET, *Histoire de la littérature française*, vol. i (Le M.A.) (Paris, 1931) pp. 298-301; G. DOUTREPONT, *Les mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIV^e au XVI^e siècle* (Brussels, 1939) (Académie Royale de Belgique, classe des Lettres, coll. in -8°, vol. XL).

² The maid-servants of the clergy had a very bad reputation, and were lampooned in ribald jests and songs, for example at Dinant (L. LAHAYE, *Cartul. de la commune de Dinant*, vol. iv (Namur, 1891) p. 150), and at Liège (BORMANS, *Répertoire chronol. des conclusions capitul. de Saint-Lambert* (Louvain, 1876), p. 205). From the end of the fifteenth century onwards there was legislation on prostitution in these regions. (Text in BORMANS, *Cartul. de la commune de Namur*, vol. iii (Namur, 1876), pp. 264, 265 and 266, note 4.). An ordinance of the provincial Council of Namur, dated 17th March 1490, against prostitutes, makes mention of "meschisses de prestes" (BORMANS: *Cartul. de la commune de Namur*, vol. iii, p. 244). In 1516 it was well known that the majority of the canons in the diocese of Liège lived as married men (A. VAN HOVE, *Etude sur les conflits de juridiction dans le diocèse de Liège à l'époque d'Erard de la Marck* (Louvain, 1900), p. 17, note 3). In 1526 we find in the same diocese an episcopal mandate, denouncing concubinage among the clergy (L. -E. HALKIN, *Le cardinal de la Marck* (Liège and Paris, 1930) p. 195). In 1556 an apostolic brief fulminated against the corrupt morals of the clergy (BORMANS, *Répertoire chronologique des conclusions capitulaires du Chapitre de Saint-Lambert à Liège* (Louvain, 1876), p. 116). These efforts were in vain, for the "actes capitulaires de Saint-Aubain à Namur" tell us that in 1661 the canons continued to maintain concubines (*Archives de l'État à Namur Actes capitul. de Saint Aubain*, rég. 7, f° 266 V°). Four years later, a magistrate's edict of 5th April 1565 forbade all married men to maintain or cultivate the acquaintance of "mesclines et concubines de prebstres" (D. BROUWERS, *Cartul. de la commune de Namur*, vol. iv, pp. 32-8). An examination of the registers of archidiaconal visits in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries preserved in the episcopal archives of Liège, would be particularly illuminating. We regret that we were not authorised to consult them on this subject.

of the Middle Ages. But this secular current, which is a real theological substratum, helps to explain the cursory attention which ecclesiastical authorities gave to woman. Beginning with St. Augustine, continued by Hugh of Saint-Victor, who could command the greatest hearing in the whole mediaeval period, by Peter Lombard, whose *Sentences* were the theological handbook of several centuries, by St. Thomas, who here endorsed completely the thought of St. Augustine, and, finally, by all those who open the *Summa* only when they seek matter for cavilling and quibbling, the sentiment persisted that "woman represents the lower part of humanity and man the higher part, reason".¹ Bossuet is in the same current of thought when he writes: "She (woman) is but a part, a kind of diminutive of Adam, according to the flesh."² Though the objection can be put forward that one can be anti-feminist without wishing to prove one's sentiments by burning witches, it must still be carefully borne in mind that, theologically speaking, it is but one step from contempt for women to the statement that woman is an intermediary between man and the devil.³

In all the literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the conjugal and social position of woman is discussed. There still exists, of course, a type of literature, continuing the tradition of the "roman courtois", in which woman reigns as queen with a circle of worshippers who take their cult from the Arthurian cycle: for Modesta Pozzo as for Christine de Pisan, Marguerite de Navarre and Guillaume Postel, "the woman is the intermediary between man and God".⁴ But much more widespread is the opinion which found expression in the "roman bourgeois", in the "fabliaux" and the "satires" of the late Middle Ages, in the first rank of which must be placed the *Roman de la Rose* of Jean de Meung.

¹ PÈRE BENOÎT LAVAUD, *La Femme et sa mission* (Paris, 1941) p. 208. In reality theology is the work of men who, consciously or unconsciously, have the pride of their sex. It would be interesting to have the freely expressed opinion of women on all this.

² BOSSUET, *Elév. sur les mystères*, iv., 2. Cited by PÈRE BENOÎT LAVAUD, op. cit., p. 199.

³ According to SPRENGER and INSTITORIS (*Malleus*, f° 20-21 v°) and BINSFELD (*Tractatus*, pp. 402, 403), woman has a sevenfold reason for indulging in witchcraft. She is more credulous and less experienced than man; she is more curious; her nature is more impressionable; she is more ill-natured: she is prompt to take revenge; she falls more quickly into despair; and, finally, she is more talkative, so that if one of her companions is a victim of sorcery she is quick to spread the news.

⁴ L. ABENSOUR, *Histoire Générale du féminisme* (Paris, 1921), p. 143. There are some interesting aspects of this question in M. L. RICHARDSON, *The Forerunners of Feminism in French Literature*, Part I (other parts not yet published); *From Christine de Pisan to Marie de Gournay* (Baltimore, 1929).

This violent classic of anti-feminism was among the most reprinted and most popular books at the end of the fifteenth century.¹

Branded with shame and flouted in scorn, woman is still the ogress in works which, though actually relegated to a second place in Renaissance literature, were very popular in the first half of the sixteenth century. There are the *Grand blason des faulx amours* of Guillaume Alecis,² the *Dialogues of Tahureau*,³ the celebrated *De legibus connubialibus* of Tiraqueau,⁴ the *Controverses Des sexes masculin et feminin* of Gratien Dupont, woven of violent and gross invective,⁵ and the *Amye de court* of Bertrand de la Borderie, "now ironic, now aggressive, now even cynical, and in all a curious reflection, undoubtedly exact, of the loose manners of the time".⁶

There are also some translations of anti-feminist works that deserve to be listed here: the celebrated *Célestine* of Fernando de Rojas, the *Jugement d'amour* of Juan de Flores, of which there were twenty-eight editions in less than a century, and the *Ris de Démocrite* of Fregoso.

But the man chiefly responsible for the debased opinion of woman in the sixteenth century was undoubtedly Rabelais, who devoted the entire Third Book of his work to the question. In a famous controversy, Rabelais challenged the worth of women. Under the pretence of an enquiry into Pantagruel's projected marriage, he weighs the pros and cons, and more often than not the scales tip in anti-feminism. And the influence of the ideas of the Curé de Meudon on Renaissance literature needs no underlining.

The end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth was the epoch of the "roman de chastes armours": sentimental, delicate, sometimes platonic, they indicated a growth in the respect shown to women. *L'Astrée*, which appeared in 1607,

¹ G. P. WINSHIP, *Gutenberg to Plantin*, p. 36 (Cambridge, 1926). The following fact is symptomatic. In 1462 there appeared the *Flagellum maleficorum*. Less than thirty years later SPRENGER and INSTITORIS took a suggestion from this title for their own book, but gave it an anti-feminist twist: the *Malleus maleficarum*.

² A. LEFRANC, in F. RABELAIS, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, Intro., p. xxxiv.

³ E. BESCH, "Un moralistesatirique et rationaliste au XVI^e siècle: Jacques Tahureau," *Revue du XVI^e siècle*, vol. vi (1919), pp. 1-44 and 157-200.

⁴ J. BARAT, "L'influence de Tiraqueau sur Rabelais," *Revue des Etudes rabelaisiennes* vol. iii (1905), p. 140.

⁵ A. LEFRANC, op. cit., pp. xlv and xlx.

⁶ Ibid., p. xlix.

was the culminating point of this literature and showed a completely changed outlook on woman. So ended the great anti-feminist wave in literature.¹ But the impetus given by Jean de Meung and Rabelais was so strong and their influence so widespread, that the back-wash of anti-feminism was felt during several decades.

A yet more direct witness to the satanic unrest which characterised the fringe of the Middle Ages and the beginnings of modern Europe was the literature of demonology. In the Middle Ages many works had been written on the occult sciences,² but a reading of these books does not leave us convinced that objective practical magic was indulged in. Certain authors, among whom are Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, are inclined to deny the prodigies claimed by the sorcerers. On the other hand, Nider, famous for his *Formicarius*, is persuaded of the reality of the witches' sabbath. Again, Gerson affirms, and Gabriel Biel denies, the power of the demons over the created world.

The opinions of authors were divided, when, in 1486, a work was published that was to have the greatest influence on the development of satanism and on the growth of zeal in its repression. This was the *Malleus maleficarum*,³ the joint work of two Dominicans—Jacob Sprenger, a professor in the University of Cologne and an inquisitor in the Rhineland, and Heinrich Institoris, an inquisitor in Upper Germany. The book had an enormous success, and there are twenty-eight known editions dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We shall not attempt here an analysis of a work which for several generations was the accepted handbook of European anti-satanism.⁴

The sixteenth century saw a welter of books on demonology. In 1505 came the *Questio lamiarum* of Samuel de Casini, and in the following year the *Apologia* of Vincent Dodo. The *Tractatus de Strigiis* of Bernard di Como and the *Liber octo questionum ad Maximilianum Caesarem* of Johannes Trithemius were published in 1508.

¹ M. MAGENDIE, *Du nouveau sur l'Astrée* (Paris, 1927), pp. 248–57.

² For the bibliography of these works, see J. GRAESSE, *Bibliotheca magica et pneumatica* (Leipzig, 1843); R. YVE-PLESSIS, *Essai d'une bibliographie française . . . de la sorcellerie et de la possession démoniaque* (Paris, 1900).

³ There is an excellent translation by J. W. R. SCHMIDT (Berlin 1920), 3 vols. Our references are to the copy (circa 1492), in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. See M. -L. POLAIN, *Catal. des livres imprimés au XVe siècle* (Brussels, 1932), p. 570.

⁴ The best study on the subject is by HANSEN, *Quellen*, pp. 360–407.

In 1510 Jakof van Hoogstraeten of Holland published his work, *Quam graviter peccant quaerentes auxilium a maleficis*.¹ Simultaneously, the Frenchman, Martin d'Arles, published his *Tractatus de superstitione*.

In the second decade of the sixteenth century came the *Opus magica superstitione* of Pedro de Ciruelo and the *De strigimagarum demonumque mirandis libri tres* of Silvester Mazolini. Then the three works of Bartolommeo di Spina were published: the *Questio de strigibus et lamiis*, the *Tractatus de praeeminentia sacrae theologiae*, and the *Apologia tres de lamiis*.

Towards the middle of the century appeared the *De agnoscendi assertionibus catholicis ac hereticis* of Arnolfo Albertini, the *De impia sortilegium* of Alfonso de Castro, the *Relectiones duodecim theologiae* of Franciscus de Victoris and the *Commentarii* of Francis Pegma. In 1579 a curé of Paris, René Benoist, gave to the public his *Traité enseignant en bref les causes des maléfices*.² The following year Jean Bodin published his *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.³

At the end of the sixteenth century the *Tractatus de confessionibus maleficarum et sagarum* (1589)⁴ of Peter Binsfeld, coadjutor of Trèves, was published and rapidly became famous. There then followed the *Discours des sorciers* of Jean Boguet (1591); the pamphlet of Franz Agricola, *Von Zauberei, Zauberrinnen und Hexen* (1596),⁵ the *Demonolatriae libri tres* (1595) of Nicholas Remi, and the works of two Jesuits—the *Commentarium theologicorum tomi quatuor* (1595) of Gregorio de Valence⁶ and the *Disquisitionum magicorum libri sex* (1599) of Martin del Rio.⁷

The seventeenth century saw a great increase in the number of books on our subject, apart altogether from works specially

¹ E. VAN ARENBERGH, *Jacques van Hoogstraeten*, Biographie Nationale (de Belgique), vol. x, cols. 77–80; G. A. MEYER, *Jacques van Hoogstraeten*, Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek, vol. i, cols. 1152–5.

² E. PASQUIER, *Un curé de Paris pendant les guerres de religion*, René Benoist, (Paris, 1913); P. CALENDINI, *Benoist*, Dict. d'hist. et de géog. ecclésiast. vol. vii, cols. 1377–80.

³ H. BAUDRILLART, *Jean Bodin et son temps* (Paris 1853); J. DEDIEU, *Bodin*, Dict. d'hist. et de géog. ecclésiast., vol. ix, cols. 330–4.

⁴ S. EHSES, *Der Trierer Weihbischof Petrus Binsfeld, Pastor Bonus*, vol. xx (1907), pp. 261–4; F. KEIL, *Der Trierer Weihbischof Peter Binsfeld*, Trierische Heimatblätter, vol. i (1922), pp. 34–8, 53–62; E. VAN CAUWENBERGH, *Binsfeld*, Dict. d'hist. et de géog. ecclésiast., vol. viii, cols. 1509–10.

⁵ A. J. A. FLAMENT, *Franz Agricola* Nieuw Nederl. Biogr. Woor., vol. iii, cols. 14–17.

⁶ A. LE ROY, *Del Rio* Biogr. Nat. (de Belgique), vol. v, cols. 476–91.

⁷ On the attitude of the Jesuits towards witchcraft, see R. SCHWICKERATH, "Attitude of the Jesuits in the Trials of Witchcraft", *American Quarterly Review*, vol. xxvii (1902), pp. 476–516. For Germany, see B. DUHR, *Die Stellung der Jesuiten in den deutschen Hexenprozessen* (Cologne, 1900) (Görres Gesellschaft).

devoted to demoniacal possession, vampires, monsters, goblins, household spirits, etc. In 1603 Jourdain Guibelet published his *Discours philosophique* which was specially devoted to the subject of incubi and succubi. Two years later came the work of the Jesuit Maldonado, *Traité des anges et des démons*, and the celebrated work of Pierre de Lancre, councillor to the Parlement de Bordeaux, *Tableau de l'inconstance*. The *Discours sur l'impuissance de l'homme et de la femme* of Vincent Tagereau¹ appeared in 1612. The Spanish inquisitor Valderama published in 1619 a *General History of the World and the Nation* in two volumes, the second of which deals with demons and sorcerers. In the following year the *Thrésor d'histoires admirables et mémorables de notre temps* of Simon Goulart contributed to the preoccupation with satanism by relating a number of witchcraft stories.

But we must limit our enumeration to the few outstanding works we have mentioned.² Except for slight variations and reservations arising from particular cases, all these works present witchcraft as a reality. A school of thought persisted, however, which denied the reality of the witches' sabbath. Some men had courage enough—for indeed it required courage—to say and to write as much. In the middle of the fifteenth century, on the eve of the *grand procès des sorciers d'Arras* (1459),³ Guillaume Edeline, a doctor of divinity and a Benedictine of Lure, undertook a crusade against the sham of sorcery and its pretence of magical practices. But he was himself prosecuted as a sorcerer (1454).⁴

¹ On this spell see L. J. HAULTIN, *Traité de l'enchantement qu'on appelle vulgairement le nouement de l'esguillette* (La Rochelle, 1591); SPRENG. ET INSTIT., *Malleus*, fo 44V^o; J. BODIN, *De la démonomanie*, fo 57-59V^o; J. DE DAMHOUDER, *Practiques et enchiridon des causes criminelles*, p. 123; SENNERTUS, *Opera Omnia*, vol. i (Lyons, 1650); p. 674; M. DEL RIO, *Disquisitionum magic.*, vol. ii, pp. 64-9; H. BOGUET, *Discours des Sorciers*, p. 234; M. COLLIN DE PLANCY, *Dict. Infernale*, vol. i, pp. 48-56 (Paris, 1825). C. LOUANDRE, *La sorcellerie* (Paris, 1853), pp. 73-4; T. DE CAUZONS, *La magie et la sorcel. en France*, vol. i (Paris, 1922), pp. 219-22, etc. A. ROBERT (*Ambroise Paré, médecin légiste* (Paris 1929), p. 147) cites in this subject the opinion of Ambroise Paré: "There are some who use such privileges to prevent a man and a woman from consummating a marriage." On this particular superstition, see A. FOURNIER: "Une épidémie de sorcellerie en Lorraine aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles", *Annales de l'Est*, vol. v (1891), p. 230; J. GARINET, *Histoire de la magie en France* (Paris, 1818), p. 139 (relating to Ile-de-France); T. LOUISE, *La sorcellerie et la justice criminelle à Valenciennes* (Valenciennes, 1861), p. 98; W. GREGER, "L'aiguillette en Écosse", *Revue des Traditions populaires*, vol. x, p. 500 (1895).

² The *Bibliographie* of Yve-Plessis, which lists only French works, has nearly two thousand titles.

³ This was one of the first great trials in the Netherlands, and one of the most celebrated. It has been studied by DUVERGER, *La Vauderie dans les Etats de Philippe le Bon* (Arras, 1885).

⁴ F. FRANÇAIS, *L'Église et la sorcellerie* (Paris, 1910) p. 56.

In 1486, the year of the *Malleus*, Jan van Beetz, a Flemish Carmelite professor of Louvain University published his work, *Expositio decem catalogie praeceptum*. Humanitarian in tone, characterised by thoughtful scepticism and a lack of hysteria, it judged of sorcerers with a good deal of tolerance.¹ In 1559, the curé of a little parish in Guelderland, Jakof Valek, published a work against the punishment inflicted on sorcerers.² In the same year there appeared a pamphlet against persecution, by Cornelius Loos, but it was condemned by ecclesiastical authority and could only be circulated in secret.

There followed, in 1564, the *De praestigiis daemonum* of Johann Wier, a work which, from the clarity of its viewpoint and the cogency of its reasoning, gave rise to immediate and impassioned discussion. A Jesuit theologian of Innsbruck, Adam Tanner, published in 1626 his *Universa theologica*, which aimed at discrediting the illusion of magic. His disciple, Friedrich von Spee, author of *Cautio criminalis*, was the great protagonist of justice and moderation in the repression of sorcery.

These works suffice to redeem the critical spirit of the human mind in this epoch. Their influence was of a cautious kind in the years immediately following 1570, but it changed to a resolute battle with anti-satanic fanaticism at the turn of the seventeenth century, and by the second quarter of the century had become a determining force, not to be ignored. We shall see that this human and rational current of thought helped to bring about the legislation bearing on this question at the end of the century of Charles the Fifth.³

¹ H. DE JONGH, *Rev. d'hist. ecclés.*, vol. xv, p. 598 (1914-1919).

² J. HABETZ, *Bijdrage tot de geschied. der Hexensprocessen in het land Valkenburg* (Maastricht, 1869).

³ There were some exceptions to the general belief. A certain priest, for example, when told of the diabolical hallucinations suffered by a young girl, replied that it was all an illusion (T. BEHAEGEL, "Les Procès de sorcellerie en Belgique", *Annales d'archéol. médicale*, vol. i (1923), p. 48. Similarly, the priests who assisted at the execution of a witch in Emsel believed her innocent and deplored the sentence (E. VAN WINTER-SHOVEN, "Chronique tirée des registres paroissiaux d'Emsel", *Bull. de la Soc. scientif. et Littér. du Limbourg*, vol. xxii (1904), p. 61). One could also quote as an exception the attitude of the Abbé de Gembloux, Gaspard Bensele, who gave the son of an executed witch an official position in the parish and refused to dismiss him when the fact of his parentage became known (ABBÉ JADIN, "Actes de la congrégation consistoriale", *Bull. de l'Institut histor. belge de Rome*, vol. xvi (1935), p. 118). We may recall, too, the attitude of the mayors of Saint-Trond who refused to apprehend denounced witches (ABBÉ SIMENON, "Suppliques adressées aux abbés de Saint-Trond", *Bull. de la Commission royale d'histoire*, vol. lxxiii (1904), pp. 467-8).

In pictorial art, where, ever since the thirteenth century, the fertile imagination of the illuminators had exercised itself on the subject of hell, two great names represent and synthesise the popular tendencies: Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Breughel the Elder.¹

Bosch's famous *Temptation of St. Antony* in the Lisbon gallery does with the visual image what the contemporary *Malleus* does with words. In it we see the invasion of the ruined fortress where, according to tradition, St. Antony sought solitude; there are the episodes of the witches' sabbath, flights through the air, meetings of satanists by the edge of a lake, the black mass, the devil-pact, etc. In the same representational vein is the triptych *The Last Judgment* of the Viennese Academy, illustrating certain mediaeval themes which particularly bear out the fantastic element of chosen passages from the Apocalypse. At first glance, the composition seems a chaotic jumble: the earth is given over to infernal monsters, the background is a sky of horror lit up with flaming houses and towns, and all hell rushes out hungrily to seize its prey. Here is a man being burned alive, there hanged, there throttled, there quartered. The water torture, the wheel, the millstone heap on the agony. A devil flies on the back of a witch; lemurs, horrible creatures from the depths of Erebus and Avernus, hurl themselves upon a stricken and shaking humanity.

The masterpieces in the fantastic style of Breughel the Elder are the "Fall of the Rebel Angels" in the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Brussels and the *Dulle Griet* of the Musée Mayer van den Bergh at Antwerp. Both are filled with the morbid unrest of Bosch. The first picture, which contains the apparition of a nightmare faun and of creatures with mollusc bodies and bat wings, represents the hurling of the damned from the heights of heaven to the burning floor of hell. The armed and helmeted amazon who flings with huge strides across the land of hell, in the *Dulle Griet*—*The Enraged Amazon*—recalls the "Triumph of Death" in the Prado, a work with the same wealth and welter of macabre details: the ravages of a pitiless mower, with here an assassin, there a gibbet,

¹ C. DE TORNAY, *H. Bosch* (Bâle, 1927); L. VAN DEN BOSSCHE, *J. Bosch* (Diest, 1944); J. COMBES, *J. Bosch* (Paris, 1946); C. DE TORNAY, *P. Breughel l'Ancien* (Brussels, 1935); G. GLUECK, *Pieter Breughel le Vieux*, trans. J. Petithuguenin (Paris, 1937) (New imp. 1939). Questions relating to the phantasmagoria of Bosch, Breughel and their successors have recently been studied by P. FIERENS, *Le fantastique dans l'art flamand* (Brussels, 1947), pp. 48-67.

and further back the plague-stricken, groups locked in battle, and on the horizon a shipwreck.

With the iconography of Bosch and Breughel should be linked the popular art of the *Danses Macabres* and of the *Ars moriendi*, which the xylography of the last years of the fifteenth century multiplied among the people.¹ The sixteenth century—obsessed with the thought of death and of the last things, of hell and the devil—saw a flourishing imagery of sheerest terror. In its naïve symbolism, the *Ars moriendi* of Vérard reproduced the common fear of what comes after death. These images, which are often very crude, depict numerous demons attacking the dying, and their grimacing, howling presence is much more frequent than the image of peace and the haloed head.

The juridical atmosphere of the epoch closely resembles the literary and the artistic.² Children of their age, the judges could not but be convinced of the reality of the facts on which they sat in judgment, when they heard the accused themselves cynically avowing their relations with the powers of hell. Several of the most illustrious jurists published treatises on satanic criminology. Jean de Mansencal, first president of the *Parlement* of Toulouse, published in 1551 a work entitled *De la Vérité et autorité de la justice en la correction et punition des maléfices*. The same year, in Louvain, Josse de Damhouder, the most accredited Low Country jurist of his time, dealt with sorcery in his *Praxis rerum criminalium*. In 1591, Pierre Ayrault, officer of the tribunal of Angers, published a strange book, a collection of *Procès faicts aux cadaver, aux cendres, a la mémoire, aux bestes brutes etc.* It was imitated in the seventeenth century by Laurent Bouchet, Jean Tournet and others.

We come now to the science of the period. Medicine, in the modern sense, was little practised. The people preferred to call in one of the great host of "healers", whose treatment consisted of the use of medicinal herbs accompanied by some superstitious practice.³

¹ E. MALE, *L'art religieux à la fin du M.A.* (Paris) pp. 359-89.

² A. ALLARD, *Histoire de la justice criminelle au XVI^e siècle*, especially pp. 464-9 (Ghent, 1868).

³ At Namur a certain doctor, Barland, gained a great scientific reputation by publishing, in 1532, a treatise on the proper use of medicinal herbs (F. D. DOYEN, *Bibliographie namuroise*, vol. i (Namur, 1887), p. 38). J. Haust published in 1941

Without any knowledge of physiology and ignoring Vesalius, the doctors of the sixteenth century practised more often than not a speculative science containing elements of occultism and even of theology. Astrology developed considerably from its contact with the art of healing.¹ Remedies were read in the stars, for was not syphilis provoked by the conjunction of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn; and why seek another origin for the plague than the entangling of some planet in the Dragon's Tail?²

According to Cornelius Agrippa, the stellar spirit animates the whole universe, and astral influences are exercised over man by means of it. The art of healing, therefore, is got from the study of this universal vital spirit.³ About the same period, Paracelsus, another luminary of his time, sought in the planets the secret of diseases. He travelled all over western Europe, collecting a multitude of strange prescriptions in hope of at last discovering a panacea for all ills.⁴

For the Belgian Van Helmont, all healing was due to the intervention of God. Sickness was simply a relic of original sin, and there could be no hope of a cure except in the use of that in whose nature God has in some way placed the power to heal. When this universal remedy was found, man might look forward to three hundred years of life!⁵

We quote the following from Ambroise Paré:

"I maintain with Hippocrates, the father and author of medicine, that there is something divine in maladies of which man can give no rational account. There are sorcerers,

a Namur medicinary of the fifteenth century, a collection of nearly two hundred prescriptions based on the curative properties of herbs (*Textes anciens de l'Académie royale de Langue et de Litt. françaises*, vol. iv).

¹ T. PERRIER, *La Médecine astrologique* (Lyons, 1905), pp. 43-4; P. SAINTYVES, *L'astrologie populaire* (Paris, 1937), p. 155.

² P. SAINTYVES, op. cit., pp. 159-60. These theories survived into the seventeenth century, being upheld in 1606 by Nicholas Ellain and in 1623 by François Monginot. On this subject, see the curious note of an apothecary of Huy to a plague-victim of 1634, quoted in R. DUBOIS, *Annales du Cercle hutois des sciences et des beaux-arts*, vol. xvii, p. 382, note 2 (1910).

³ A. PROST, *Les sciences et les arts occultes au XVI^e siècle, Cornelius Agrippa* (Paris, 1881); passim P. SAINTYVES, op. cit., pp. 149-50.

⁴ Paracelsus, like all Christian alchemists, added to pathogenic causes the direct influence of God punishing the sins of man by sickness (R. F. ALLENDY, *L'alchimie et la médecine. Étude sur les théories hermétiques dans l'histoire de la médecine* (Paris, 1923), p. 131; G. W. SURYA and SINDBAB, *Astrologie und Medizin*, 4th ed. (Lorch, 1933), p. 32).

⁵ Excellently dealt with by P. NÈVE DE MÉVERGRIES, *Jean-Baptiste van Helmont, philosophe par le feu* (Liège and Paris, 1935), pp. 189-96.

enchanters, poisoners, evil-doers, twisters, deceivers, who have sealed their fate by a pact by which the demons have become their slaves and vassals, so that in subtle and diabolical ways, they can corrupt the body, the mind, the life and the health of men and of other creatures."¹

About 1600, two works were published which treated of maladies according to their supposed demoniacal origin: the *Traicté de l'Épilepsie* of Jean Taxil (1602) and the *Épitome des préceptes de médecine* of Pierre Pigrain (1606).²

The surgeons did not differ from the doctors. In 1594 Guillemau, first surgeon of Henry the Third and Paré's finest pupil, wrote: "We believe that wounds inflicted in a full moon are the most humid, putrid and phagademic: the driest and most easily healed are those inflicted under a waning moon."³

Moreover, alchemy, which sought the secret of changing base metals into gold, flourished considerably at the Renaissance. Van Helmont can be regarded as typical, for he attempted the experiment several times. Certain utopians devoted themselves to search for a new essence—an essence which would reconcile the purely material and the purely spiritual, and which would be the principle of life.⁴ Others gave themselves to the study of spontaneous generation, so that the vogue of the "homunculus" was quite wide in the sixteenth century.⁵

With Paracelsus, at once doctor, philosopher, astrologer and alchemist, and with Jérôme Cardan, a famous mathematician, must be listed Augier Ferrier of Toulouse and the Florentine Ruggieri who came to Paris in the retinue of Catherine de Medici, the great patron of astrologers and of magicians.⁶ There were

¹ C. D'ESCHEVANNES, *La vie d'Ambroise Paré* (Paris, 1930), pp. 50-1. Robert Flatt, a celebrated English doctor of the eighteenth century, also shared this opinion. See C. G. CUMSTON, *Histoire de la médecine*, trans. Dispan de Floran (Paris, 1931), p. 323.

² R. YVE-PLESSIS, op. cit., p. 96.

³ P. SAINTYVES, op. cit., p. 154. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that sixteenth-century statistics show a high mortality rate. Paracelsus could claim only one patient cured in every thousand. At the end of that century, the Italian Mercuriali tells us, the mortality rate was still ninety-nine per cent (CUMSTON, op. cit., p. 316).

⁴ A notable case of this took place at the second Provincial Council of Cambrai, in 1604 (Z. B. VAN ESPEN, *Jus. eccles. univ.*, vol. ii (Louvain and Brussels, 1700), p. 1346). On 12th February 1632 the Archbishop of Cambrai and the suffragan bishops again returned to the charge (*Archives de l'Etat à Namur, Conseil prov.*, file 39). C. G. CUMSTON, op. cit., p. 300.

⁵ R. F. ALLENDY, op. cit., pp. 63-5 and 123.

⁶ The most rigidly orthodox courts were infected by the belief in magicians. The Archduchess Isabella sent some magic powders from Brussels to a sick Spanish prince.

also the Florentine Junetino, the Frenchman Pierre d'Ailly, the Neopolitan Luc Laurie and still others: Scaliger, de Thou, etc.

Thus, interference from the beyond, demoniacal rites, infernal powers, were the subjects of intellectual activity: the wind of literature breathed anti-feminism, which is the pre-condition for witch-persecution; art presented an iconography peopled with lemurs, monsters and demons; in law and in theology, there was a demonological literature which exceeded in bulk that of any other epoch; medicine studied magic and the stars; science gave itself passionately to strange research on insoluble problems. All intellectual activity tended towards a mysterious unknown, where men hoped to find an easy remedy for human sufferings. More than ever, the human mind sought in arbitrary conceptions, by subtle means known only to the initiated and little in accordance with the marvellous results aimed at, to lift itself out of its own mediocrity.

The doors were thus thrown open to the multiplying of sorcerers and to the rigour of their suppression.

The Bull *Summis desiderantes* of Innocent VIII, issued on December 6th 1484, was long considered to be the papal declaration of war against witchcraft—the "war-cry of Hell", as one writer called it. In reality, however, as M. J. Pratt has shown, it contains no dogmatic ruling and adds nothing new to the subject.¹ The analysis of this document falls into three parts. In the first, the Pope recalls that the care of souls ought to be the ceaseless concern of pastors, and he declares the sorrow with which he has learned that in some regions of Germany, especially in the dioceses of the Rhine, many of the faithful have turned from the Catholic religion and are indulging in carnal relations with devils. The second part treats in detail of witchcraft. In the third and shortest part, the Pope entrusts to the wisdom of the inquisitors Sprenger and Institoris the task of prosecuting offenders with the rigours of ecclesiastical justice.

This document, which is far from having the juridical importance of the Decretals of John XXII, was followed by others of

It is a case in a hundred, but it is typical and it concerns one of the most Christian princesses of her time (PIRENNE, *Hist. de Belgique*, vol. iv (Brussels, 1927), p. 385).

¹ M. J. PRATT, *The Attitude of the Catholic Church Towards Witchcraft* (Washington, 1915).

a more precise nature. In 1500 Alexander VI wrote to the Prior of Klosterneuburg and to the inquisitor Institoris for information as to the progress of sorcery in Bohemia and Moravia.¹ Some years later, in 1513, Julius II ordered the inquisitor of Cremona to prosecute those who were abusing the Eucharist with practices of witchcraft, or who were worshipping the devil.² The Bull of Leo X, *Honestis petentium votis*, in 1521, protested against the attitude of the Venetian senate which had opposed the repressive action of the inquisitors of Brescia and Bergamo against sorcerers.³ The Pope threatened excommunication and interdict. This was but one of the many conflicts between the Holy See and the Serenissima Republica. A year later, Leo's successor, Adrian VI, adopted an identical attitude in the Bull *Dudum uti nobis* addressed to the inquisitor of Cremona,⁴ and he dispatched a similar message, some months later, to the inquisitor of Como, Modesta Vicentino, commanding him to prosecute sorcery with great severity. We find the same attitude in his successor, Clement VII, when he wrote to the governor of Bologna,⁵ and again in 1526 in regard to the Chapter of Sion.⁶

These documents, following each other at very short intervals, show how anxious the Holy See had become about satanism, and how concerned to check its development.

This attitude persisted. The Bulls *Coeli et terrae* (1585)⁷ and *Omnipotentis Dei* (1623)⁸ were faithful echoes of the fulminations of John XXII and Innocent VIII. But, though the dogmatic foundation of the question remained unaltered, the import and the interpretation of the texts troubled Urban VIII (1623-44), who drew the attention of the ecclesiastical judges to abuses which had been introduced into the matter. This Pontiff urged the judges not to allow themselves to be drawn into rash and thoughtless measures against sorcerers.⁹

A movement originating in Rome has always a directive force for the whole Catholic world. The attention of the ecclesiastical

¹ M. J. PRATT, op. cit., p. 95; J. HANSEN, op. cit., p. 32.

² *Magnum Bull. Rom.*, vol. i, p. 617; PRATT, op. cit.; HANSEN, op. cit.

³ *Magnum Bull. Rom.*, vol. i, p. 625.

⁴ PRATT, op. cit., p. 94; HANSEN, op. cit., p. 34.

⁵ PRATT, op. cit.; HANSEN, op. cit.

⁶ PRATT, op. cit., p. 95; HANSEN, op. cit., p. 37.

⁷ PRATT, op. cit.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ T. DE CAUZONS, op. cit., vol. i, p. 393.

authorities was caught by these Bulls, which found an echo in the consequent decisions of the ecclesiastical Councils.

Here are a few examples. In 1536 and 1550 the Councils of Cologne excommunicated such members of the clergy as were given to sorcery.¹ In 1538 the Council of Trèves condemned those who used arts of divination or who worshipped Satan.² The Council of Cambrai (1565) forbade the faithful to seek for the cure of men or of animals in magic and it excommunicated those who, under any pretext whatsoever, practised forbidden arts.³ In the same ecclesiastical province the Council of 1631 extended the legislation to those who consulted soothsayers.⁴ The Malines Council of 1607 condemned sorcerers and soothsayers, and commanded the ecclesiastical judges and exhorted the lay judges to punish with exile those who had recourse to them.⁵ There was similar legislation at Tournay in the Councils of 1574 and 1600,⁶ while in 1643 the formalities of exorcism⁷ were there codified, which pointed to the existence of many cases of diabolical possession. In 1583, the Council of Rheims excommunicated sorcerers, "who make a pact with the devil, who prevent sexual relations, who practise devilries and pretend to heal through the power of Satan."⁸ The Metz Council of 1610 censured those who make use of the Eucharist, relics or holy images with a view to casting a spell, and it made this a reserved sin.⁹ In Liège, the Council of 1585 denounced as heretics worthy of the stake those who indulge in magic.¹⁰ The same sentiments were expressed in 1618, and the clergy were directed to warn and to instruct the people when they preached or heard confessions.¹¹ Finally, in the diocese of Namur, the Council of 1604 forbade the

¹ G. HARTZHEIM, *Concilia Germaniae*, 2nd ed., vol. iv, pp. 259 and 637.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vi, p. 409; J. J. BLATTEAU, *Statuta synodalia . . . archidiocesis trevirensis*, vol. ii (Trèves, 1844), p. 120.

³ T. GOUSSET, *Les actes de la province eccles. de Reims*, vol. iii (Rheims, 1828), pp. 665 and 690.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 10.

⁵ P. DE RAM, *Synodicon belgicum*, vol. i, pp. 319, 388, 389. The Council of 1570 had already prosecuted those who had gone in for superstition, that is, seeking after things otherwise than by reasonable means and without the aid of God and the help of religion (*ibid.*, vol. i. p. 108).

⁶ *Summa statutorum synodaliū (diocesis tornacensis)* (Lille, 1726), p. 206.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁸ T. GOUSSET, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 443.

⁹ G. HARTZHEIM, *op. cit.*, vol. vii, p. 973.

¹⁰ A. VAN HOVE, "Les statuts synodaux de Liège de 1585," *Analectes pour servir à l'hist. ecclés. de la Belgique*, vol. xxxiii (1907), p. 12.

¹¹ G. HARTZHEIM, *op. cit.*, vol. ix, pp. 288-9.

use of books dealing with magic, and excommunicated those who practised the inducing of strangury, the *nouement de l'aiguillette*.¹ The Council of 1639 endorsed the rulings of 1604.²

Having split Christianity into two hostile groups, the Reformation became obsessed by Satanism. Since they rejected the Roman tradition, the Protestant Churches found their charter for the prosecution of witches in the Old and New Testaments. Though the theological basis differed from that of the Catholic Church in these matters, the result was identical. Luther, Melancthon and Calvin believed in Satanism, and the fanatical preaching of their disciples aggravated the natural credulity of the nations who accepted the new Gospel.

From 1580 to 1620, the majority of the disciplinary and dogmatic Protestant assemblies discussed the question of sorcery, both in general and in specific instances. Each assembly made it the object of synodal denunciations, and it was decreed that such as do these things were to be excluded from the Lord's Supper. Thus, in the United Provinces, condemnations were issued from the synod of Harderwijk in 1580,³ 1595⁴ and 1599;⁵ from Arnheim in 1581;⁶ from Dordrecht in 1590;⁷ from Goes in 1597;⁸ from Assen in 1610,⁹ 1612,¹⁰ 1615,¹¹ 1616,¹² 1618,¹³ 1619,¹⁴ and 1620;¹⁵ from Zwolle in 1615,¹⁶ and from Kampen in 1620.¹⁷ The synods in France were especially concerned with the "*nouement de l'aiguillette*". They condemned this superstition and excommunicated its authors in 1594¹⁸ at Montauban, and in

¹ *Decreta et statuta omnium synodorum diocesarum namurcensium* (Namur, 1720), p. 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³ J. REITSMA and S. D. VAN VEEN, *Acta der provinciale en particuliere synode*, vol. iv (Groningen, 1895), p. 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 78.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 373.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. v (Groningen, 1896), p. 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. viii (Groningen, 1899), p. 130.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 156.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 197.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 208.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 220.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 234.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 242.

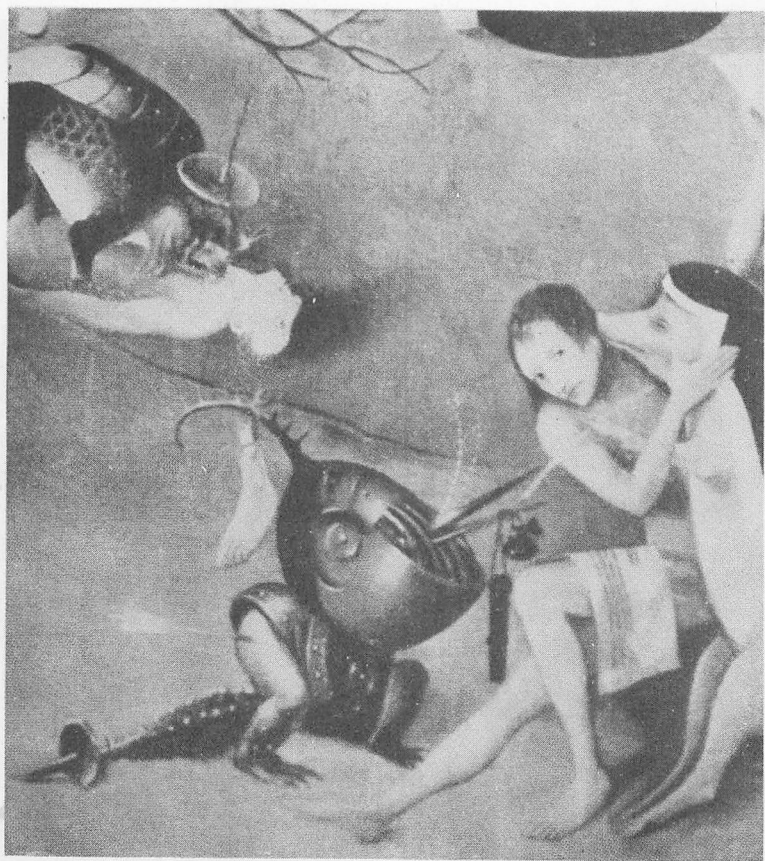
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. v, p. 296.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. v, p. 353.

¹⁸ J. AYMON, *Tous les synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, vol. i (The Hague, 1710), p. 183.



Pl. 18. *The Fall of the Damned*. Florentine, late 13th century. From the mosaic in the Baptistry at Florence. (Photo. Alinari.)



Pl. 19. Hieronymus Bosch. *The Pact with the Devil*. Detail from the *Garden of Delights*. (After J. Combe, *Hieronymus Bosch*.)

1598 at Montpellier.¹ The findings of this last assembly were adopted and confirmed at La Rochelle in 1607.²

We now turn our attention to lay legislation. We shall confine our study to the texts of one country, for it would be impossible to consider the vast amount of material on this subject throughout the Christian world. What we say of the Low Countries can be taken as typical of all Europe.

From the Middle Ages, punishments of exceptional severity³ were decreed against those who practised sorcery, by numerous edicts of Common Law, such as those of Brabant,⁴ of Hainaut,⁵ of Bruges,⁶ of Maastricht,⁷ of Andenne⁸ and of Houffalize.⁹

The *Nemesis Carolina*, a monument of criminal jurisprudence promulgated by Charles V in 1532, had three passages concerning witchcraft. The first concerned those who used incantations, books and amulets, strange objects and formulae, or who assumed weird attitudes. These might be arrested and put to torture.¹⁰ The second passage discussed the subjects about which suspected persons were to be questioned so as to discover when and by what means they achieved their dark desires. Did they use poisoned powder or magic sachets? Did they frequent the witches' sabbath, and had they entered into a pact with the devil?¹¹ The third passage dealt with their punishment. It recalled that in Roman law magicians were condemned to be burned, and it commanded the same punishment for all those who were addicted to practices of witchcraft, even if they had thereby done no evil to their neighbour.¹²

¹ J. AYMONT, *Tous les synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, vol. i, (The Hague 1710), p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 308 and 330.

³ Especially decapitation with a saw.

⁴ E. POULLET, *Histoire du droit pénal dans l'ancien duché de Brabant*, vol. i (Brussels), p. 278.

⁵ C. FAIDER, *Coutumes du pays et comté de Hainaut*, vol. ii (Brussels, 1873), pp. 460 and 485.

⁶ L. GILLIODTS VAN SEVEREN, *Coutumes du quartier de Bruges*, vol. v (Brussels, 1892), p. 479.

⁷ L. GRAHAY, *Coutumes de la ville de Maestricht* (Brussels, 1876), p. 159.

⁸ L. LAHAYE, *Cartulaire de la commune d'Andenne*, vol. i (Namur, 1875), p. 87.

⁹ N. J. LECLERCQ and C. LAURENT, *Coutumes du pays et du duché de Luxembourg et comté de Chiny*, vol. i (Brussels, 1867), p. 331. The whole body of German common law has been studied from this viewpoint by E. KIESSLING, *Zauberei in den germanischen Volksrechten*, Jena (1941).

¹⁰ *Nemesis Carolina*, cap. xlv.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, cap. lii.

¹² *Ibid.*, cap. cix.

It is interesting to note that, besides being a guide to investigation, the *Carolina* gives in these three passages a catalogue of sorcery in which the principal kinds of witchcraft are enumerated. It is an endorsement of the Bull *Summis desiderantes*, and a recognition by an imperial act of a state of affairs towards which Rome had already declared her attitude.

From the second half of the sixteenth century, several edicts were promulgated which defined the attitude of the state. These were the ordinances of 20th July 1592, of 8th November 1595, and of 10th April 1606. Together with a penal ordinance of 1570,¹ these made up the anti-satanic code of the central authority of the Netherlands in the modern era. The texts were published² and studied, a century ago, by J. B. Cannaert,³ and more recently by H. Pirenne,⁴ M. l'abbé Pasture,⁵ Père de Moreau,⁶ H. J. Elias.⁷ But these historians could not put themselves back in the atmosphere in which this legislation was made, and therefore, in estimating it, they failed to appreciate the leniency of its nature.

If we adopt the view of our learned predecessors that the epoch of the Archdukes (1598-1621) marks the time when "the crime of heterodoxy yielded to the crime of witchcraft",⁸ we may very logically suppose that the anti-satanic legislation opened the floodgates to the cruellest persecution, and that the judges could justify a riot of executions by pointing to the violence of the instructions issued to them.

This is, however, an error, which has grown up for several reasons. The archives of the end of the fourteenth century have whole dossiers packed with anti-satanic records, better preserved and more easily accessible to paleographers than documents from

¹ *Placards de Brabant*, vol. ii, pp. 386-7.

² Ordonnance de 1592: *Placards de Flandre*, vol. ii, pp. 35-9. Ordonnance de 1595: L. P. GACHARD, *Analectes Beligiques*, vol. i (Brussels, 1830), p. 212, note. The answer of the Council of Flanders to this ordinance has been published in *Messenger des Sciences histor.* vol. xxviii (1850), pp. 374-84. Ordonnance de 1606: V. BRANTS, *Ordonnances des P. -B. sous le règne d'Albert et Isabelle* vol. i, pp. 286-7.

³ J. B. CANNAERT, *Olim, procès de sorcières en Flandre* (Ghent, 1847), pp. 6 ff.

⁴ H. PIRENNE, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 347, note.

⁵ A. PASTURE, *La restauration religieuse aux Pays-Bas catholiques* (Louvain, 1925), pp. 49 ff. See also his "La Sorcellerie", *Collationes dioec. tornacensis*, vol. xxxiii (1938), pp. 85 ff.

⁶ E. DE MOREAU, art. "Belgique", *Dict. d'hist. et de Géog. ecclés.*, vol. vii; col. 649.

⁷ H. J. ELIAS, *Kerk en Staat in de zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Ghent, 1931), pp. 38 ff.

⁸ H. PIRENNE, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 347.

other epochs. Hence it is that the majority of the published trials have been taken from the dossiers of the archducal period, and thus a somewhat unbalanced historical impression is created. Again, the most rigorous treatises on demonology, after the *Malleus*, date from the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹ Finally, the anti-satanic legislation was carefully condensed in the ordinances of 1592, 1595 or 1606, while the much more ancient decrees of Common Law have been left in obscurity.

Now, the second half of the reign of Charles the Fifth and the beginning of that of his son and successor, Philip II, from 1535 to 1560, were quite as bloodthirsty in the suppression of satanism as was the government of the Archdukes. An exhaustive examination of the archives proves this quite clearly.² The end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth were merely the second and last great stages of the persecution. Already, the élite of society—among them the jurists of the high courts, the authors and interpreters of legislation—were growing tired. The more sceptical were beginning to shrug their shoulders at it all, nor had they to await the backing of a Tanner or a Von Spee for their opinions for they could point to the opinions of Guillaume Edeline, Jan van Beetz, Jakof Valek, Cornelius Loos and Johann Wier. These were the precursors, and they were to have many disciples in the last three decades of the sixteenth century.

We shall now examine the ordinances in the light of what has been said. That of 1592, after an enumeration of sorcery cases which takes up a great part of the text, goes on to list the existing laws on this matter and suggest that the religious power given by Canon Law should make its influence felt through preaching

¹ The historian must certainly not minimise the value of these testimonies of the demonologists. They constitute a source whose importance it would be difficult to exaggerate, for Binsfeld, Bodin, Del Rio and others of their kind are marvellously well-informed on their subject. But these are clerics or jurists, whose works are concerned with moral issues or with the precision of the law, and they therefore ignore many of the most interesting aspects of the question. *A fortiori*, the same can be said of the legislative texts. Apart from the clauses dealing simply with the repressive side of the matter, the most subtle of critics could gather only very general indications.

² We have undertaken a scientific enquiry—the first, we think (see, on this, H. PIRENNE, *op. cit.*)—on sorcery in the Netherlands from the end of the Middle Ages to the middle of the seventeenth century. The first stage in this work led us to examine thoroughly the archives of a principality of Namur. This necessarily involved an examination of secretarial archives, the documents of courts of justice, provincial councils and exchequers, to the extent of about two thousand registers and files. We have also consulted typical examples from the archives of other principalities.

and through the Sacrament of Penance. The document directs that the chastisement of the guilty shall be according to the full rigour of the law, to the exclusion of the of superstitious measures and probatory extra-judiciary means used by certain judges. Since this gave a guarantee against refinements of cruelty devised and often practised by the executioners, it represented a real alleviation for the guilty.¹ To this is added a recommendation which shows the anxiety occasioned by the spread of the evil: the measures undertaken must be carried out with great discretion, lest they should have the effect of teaching sorcery to the masses happily ignorant of it. Though couched in strong and even violent terms, this edict confines itself to the ruling of Canon Law and refers to it as its text for acting rather by persuasion than by rigour.

The edict of 1595 recalls that of 1592. It renews the obligation of acting "in juridical ways and by reasonable means".² It reprehends once again certain types of procedure, notably that by water, which it lists as abuses.³ Though this trial was severely condemned, it had a wide vogue in all countries. It consisted of tying the thumb of the accused person's right hand to the big toe of the left foot, and the left-hand thumb to the big toe of the right foot, and lowering him into the waters of a well or river. The accused was proved guilty if he floated.

Eleven years later, the archducal ordinance of 1606 comes as a remarkable confirmation of our point of view. Having recalled

¹ E. HUBERT, "La torture", *Mémoires cour. de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, vol. lv (Brussels 1898), pp. 17-20. There are two observations to be made. The author writes (p. 20): "And to think that the judges assisted in person at the torturing of the accused . . . as though it were the most natural thing in the world, merely the discharge of a professional duty". It was indeed one of their duties, theoretically designed to prevent abuses. But they frequently waived it. See E. BROUETTE, "Deux étapes de la répression de la sorcellerie dans le Luxembourg: les ordonnances de 1563 et 1591", *Bull. de l'Institut. archéol. du Luxembourg*, vol. xxi (1945), p. 32. And Hubert adds: "Accounts of the administration of justice show . . . that frequently the magistrates relieved the tedium of these bloody and interminable sessions with gargantuan feasts and copious drinking at the public expense." In reality this was a feast which followed the judgment, whether the sentence was one of acquittal or of condemnation.

² This part of the text is unpublished, as Gachard omitted the beginning and gave merely a brief summary. Text in *Archives du Gouvernement grand-ducal à Luxembourg*, "Edits et Placards", reg. G, fo 229; the copy formerly kept at Mons (listed by C. TERLINDEN, *Liste chron. provisoire des édits. et ord. des. P. B., règne de Philippe*, ii (Brussels, 1912), p. 281), was destroyed in the fire at that depository in 1940.

³ Denounced as useless in 1593 by the Leyden faculties of medicine and of philosophy. On this test, see J. BODIN, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, p. 326; P. BINSFELD, *Tractatus de confessionibus*, p. 157; J. SCHELTEMA, *Geschiedenis der Hexenprocessen* (Haarlem, 1828), p. 69.

the obligation of a rigorous application of the law, the document stipulates—for the third time—that this is to be done only by juridical means: it goes on to insist on the obligation of imposing full penalties, and it creates special commissioners in the courts principally concerned with the repression of satanism, this latter being an innovation which gave fresh proof of a wish to secure justice for the accused.

We are not fitting the texts to a theory when we maintain that an examination of these three ordinances reveals a double preoccupation on the part of the authorities. In the first place, there is the effective repression of witchcraft. For the Christian society of that epoch, all heresy was something to be prosecuted. A social aspect was added to the religious: the caster of lots is a criminal and ought to receive due punishment. Anti-satanic legislation was justified both from the religious and the social points of view. The second preoccupation of the judges was the fear of seeing an increase in the number of burnings. The guilty must be punished certainly, and punished rigorously; but we must not provoke hecatombs under cover of repression. Already, under Charles the Fifth, the very number of the executions had injured the cause of repression: is this not clear from the precision and the number of formalities in the procedure?

But, it may be asked, what was the practical outcome of these legislative acts?

Following the lead of the central authority, provincial Councils brought in legislation which aimed at diminishing the abuses, while ensuring that justice should be done. On 9th June 1606 six jurists¹ were nominated by the Council of Flanders, and on 22nd January 1608 they brought in an edict concerning the impeachment, imprisonment, examination and torture of sorcerers.² At Namur, on 4th December 1623, the provincial Council, recalling the governmental ordinance of 1606 and "bearing in mind the time and expense which instruction in these criminal matters involves", named four advocates who would concentrate on the matter.³ On 14th June 1630 this number was increased to seven.⁴ In Luxembourg, the province where satanism seems to

¹ V. BRANTS, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 292.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 374.

³ *Archives de l'État à Namur*, "Conseil provincial, Registre aux sentences" (1620-34), ff° 220 v° and 221.

⁴ *Ibid.*, "Registre aux Sentences" (1630-5), ff° 32 and 32 v°.

have been first punished,¹ the authorities took restrictive measures in matters concerning the authority of local judges in 1563 and 1591.²

It is moreover certain that measures passed in high places did not remain a dead letter. Doubtless there were still many abuses on the part of local judges, but we see that those who acted beyond their powers were themselves prosecuted. It must also be remembered that reparation of honour was obtained by some whose fair name had been fouled with the epithet of witch or sorcerer.³

Thus, an examination of the anti-satanic legislation of the Netherlands disperses many legends and rectifies many errors. It is evident that the last quarter of the sixteenth century suffered a conscience-crisis which had its repercussion in the lay legislation relating to the satanists.

The last ordinance of the Netherland rulers in this matter was that of 31st July 1660, the text of which reveals the indifference of the judges towards repression.⁴ In reality, the great days of sorcery were over, and the cases in which the provisions of this document were implemented were very rare.

In the principality of Liège, the legislation of Ernest of Bavaria

¹ N. VAN WERVEKE, *Kulturgeschichte des Lux. Landes*, vol. i (Luxembourg, 1924), p. 288.

² E. BROUETTE, op. cit. At Floreffe (district of Namur), the Mayor was condemned for having exceeded the authorised limits in matters of torture (*Archives de l'Etat à Namur*, Conseil prov., file 1278). At Golzinne (ibid.), the torturer used the thumb-screw during an inquisition: he was condemned (ibid., file 1305). Jean Jacquet, magistrate of Saint-Amand lez Fleurus, was condemned for having gone away while the torturing was being carried out, and thus allowed the man in charge to use excessive torture on the accused (ibid., file 13). Moderation in torture was a wholly relative affair. BINSFELD (*Tractatus de confessionibus* . . . , p. 660) says: "hominibus non magis in terorentiis quam deliris et furiosis bestiis, ita ut rei saepe vitam aut amittant aut miseram servant ut magis mori quam vivere saniori iudicio uxoptandam foret." According to DEL RIO (*Disquisitionum magicarum*, vol. iii, p. 63), the method of torture was left to the choice of the judge, but was supposed to be moderated by his humanity and sense of equity.

³ Jean Massonet, of Perwez-lez-Andenne (principality of Liège) was condemned to a pilgrimage to Saint James of Compostella for such defamation (*Archives de l'Etat à Namur*, "Greffes scab.", P.-lez-A., file 43). At Namur, Pierre Delimoy obtained judgment against Georges François and his wife who had accused him of being a sorcerer (ibid., Conseil prov., liasse aux Sentences 1610-11). The mayor of Fosse (principality of Liège) was condemned to pay damages and reparation for having prosecuted a woman as a witch without proof or balance of probability (*Archives de l'Etat à Liège*, "Grand greffe des Echevins", reg. 328, f° 226. This document disappeared in December 1944 when the place was partly destroyed by a German flying-bomb). Other examples, for Flanders in J. B. CANNAERT, op. cit., and for Spa in A. BODY, *Spa, histoire et bibliographie* (Spa, 1892).

⁴ *Placards de Flandre*, vol. iii, p. 219.

of 30th December 1608 laid down the procedure to be followed. According to the preamble, the justification of these measures lay in the fact that the stamping out of the evil was a sacrifice pleasing to God and necessary for the protection of men. Prosecution must take place in the presence of two deputed officials, and the expenses were to be met by the commune to which the accused belonged.¹

Child-witches and child-sorcerers, for there were such,² proved also a matter of concern to the authorities. On the subject of boys and girls convicted of sorcery, the Bishop of Tournai directed, on 13th June 1590: "In the first place, they are to be well catechised and instructed and, in consequence, led to true contrition and abomination of a horrible sin, and then they are to receive the Sacrament of Penance. Exorcism may then be used, if necessary."³ On their side, the Archdukes promulgated an ordinance, dated 1612, condemning abuses of justice in regard to child-sorcerers. Sentence of death could not be passed on them before the age of puberty. The judges were to confine themselves to making such children witness the punishment of their parents, to whipping them and keeping them for some time in prison, or, better still, placing them in a religious house with a view to their re-education.⁴

By an ordinance of 1682, Louis XIV put an end to prosecution for sorcery in France. The era of satanism was over. We end by referring to a discourse given before the court of Liège in 1675 by the advocate Hautefeuille, with the title: "On magicians and sorcerers, in which it is clearly proved that there cannot be such a

¹ M. L. POLAIN, *Ordonnances de la principauté de Liège*, 2nd series, vol.ii (Brussels, 1871), p. 290.

² J. ERNOTTE, *La sorcellerie dans l'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse*, vol. xvi (Wallonia, 1908), p. 120; A. DINAUX, "La sorcière de Préseau", *Archives hist. et littér., Nouvelle série*, vol. i, (1837), pp. 232-7; C. ROUSSELLE, *Des procès de sorcellerie à Mons* (Mons, 1854); pp. 7-19. T. LOUISE, *op cit.*; C. MASSON, "Le dernier procès de sorcellerie au pays de Liège" (Jean Delvaux, aged fifteen), *Revue de Belgique*, vol. xxvi (1877), p. 186; E. POLAIN, "La vie à Liège sous Ernest de Bavière", *Bull. de l'Institut archéol. liégeois*, vol. lv (1931), p. 121; P. HEUPGEN, "Les enfants devant la juridiction répressive à Mons du XIV^e au XVII^e siècle," *Bull. de la Com. royale des anciennes bois et ordonnances de la Belgique*, vol. xi (1923), pp. 205-36; (by the same), "Infants sorciers en Hainaut au XVII^e siècle," in the same review, vol. xii (1933), pp. 457-79. E. BROUETTE, "Quelques cas d'enfants sorciers au XVII^e siècle," *La Vie wallonne*, vol. xxi (1947), pp. 133-8.

³ J. J. E. PROOST, "Les tribunaux ecclésiastiques en Belgique," *Annales de l'Académie d'archéol. de Belgique*, 2nd series, vol. viii (1872), p. 82.

⁴ In fact, this was simply the codified form of a law long in use. See C. FAIDER, *op. cit.*, vol ii, p. 485, and P. HEUPGEN, *Enfants sorciers* . . . pp. 460-5.

kind of people."¹ Who would have dared, a century earlier, to undertake such a discourse before a tribunal?

In more modern days, sorcery came under the jurisdiction of lay tribunals. Independently of the privilege of the forum, ancient law distinguished between crimes in matters of religion, which were the concern of the episcopal tribunal, and infringements of secular law, reserved in practice to lay justice, to the tribunal, and later to the officials and the different administrators of justice of that century.²

In the golden age of the mediaeval Church, the apogee of a clerical world, the ecclesiastical court dealt not only with strictly religious cases, such as simony and sacrilege, but concerned itself also, under pretext of their being intimately linked to religion, with the ensemble of what were called mixed cases—marriage, matrimonial conventions, usury, etc.

The lay princes fought all the time against the encroachment of the spiritual power in matters which concerned the lay tribunals.³ The struggle followed the ascending curve of the secular power, which, when this power was victorious, brought concordats which set limits to the juridical power of the Church. Almost everywhere, the Church lost power to deal with mixed cases.

Although it was a mixed case in the full sense of the word,

¹ *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Rés. 38230.

² On the ecclesiastical tribunals, courts and inquisition, see especially FOURNIER: *Les officialités au M.A.* (Paris, 1879); T. DE CAUSSON, *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1888-9); L. TANON, *Histoire des tribunaux de l'Inquisition en France* (Paris, 1893); H. C. LEA, *A History of the Spanish Inquisition*; MGR. DOUAIS, *L'Inquisition, ses origines, sa procédure* (Paris, 1906); L. FEBVRE, *Notes et documents sur la réforme et l'inquisition en Franche-Comté* (Paris, 1911); C. MOELLER, "Les bûchers et les autodafés de l'inquisition depuis le M.A.", *Revue d'hist. eccles.*, vol. xiv (1913), pp. 720-51, and vol. xv (1914-19) pp. 50-69; J. GUIRAUD, *Histoire de l'inquisition au M.A.*, vol. i and vol. ii (only two published) (Paris, 1935-8). On the competence of the judge in relation to the rank of the accused, see P. FOURNIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-77; A. VAN HOVE, *Étude sur les conflits de juridiction dans le diocèse de Liège à l'époque d'Erard de la Marck* (Louvain, 1900), pp. 150-5.

³ For the Middle Ages, see especially P. FOURNIER, "Les conflits de juridiction entre l'Eglise et le pouvoir séculier," *Revue des questions histor.*, vol. xxvii (1880), pp. 432-64. For the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, see the book by A. VAN HOVE which we have already noted. These two books give an idea of the complexity of the questions raised. Was the Spanish Inquisition simply an instrument in the hands of royalty? This is a controversial question. Contrary to the opinion of Hefele, Gams and Cardinal Hergenröther, the American historian LEA (*A History of the Spanish Inquisition*, vol. iv (New York, 1907), pp. 248-9) rejects the attractive theory of a parallel development of the Inquisition and Spanish absolutism, though he recognises that the Inquisition was a factor in territorial and administrative unification. There are arguments on both sides, and it would seem that the last word has not been said on the matter.

sorcery often escaped the ecclesiastical court. The exact determination of competence had but rarely been the object of a legislative text, and a first empirical decision could not be made a precedent without much conflict resulting.¹ Some jurists have even maintained that the ecclesiastical court ceased absolutely to concern itself with sorcery, inasmuch as it was a capital crime punishable with death.² But this assertion is but partly justifiable. According to Canon Law, the ecclesiastical tribunal could not pronounce a sentence which involved the shedding of blood. If the crime involved the death-sentence, as was in principle the case with sorcery, the accused was handed over to the secular court, which instituted a new process, and applied the punishment or acquitted the accused, according to a new estimate of the evidence.

We instance the concordat of Liège in 1542, established between the Prince Bishop, as spiritual head of his diocese, and Charles the Fifth.³ Sorcery, it reads, shall belong to the jurisdiction of the secular tribunal, unless it involves devil-invocation or abjuration of the faith, in which case the crime will be the concern of the ecclesiastical tribunals. In this, the text continues, the procedure to be followed is the same as that for heresy. This was merely a confusion of the issue, for though in the majority of cases sorcery involved diabolical invocation, the caroline legislation reduced to nothing the ecclesiastical competence in these matters. The state arrogated to itself the power to judge almost all the exterior manifestations of sorcery, and confined the repressive action of the Church solely to the domain of doctrine, the field of conscience, which, juridically speaking, involved little or nothing.⁴

What was the repressive action of the inquisition? We lack precise details of this extraordinary jurisdiction,⁵ because the inquisitorial archives have not come down to us.⁶ There are

¹ A. VAN HOVE, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

² J. B. VAN ESPEN, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 1351.

³ Text in *Coutumes de Namur*, ed. Van der Elst (Malines, 1733), p. 155.

⁴ This has been brought out by A. VAN HOVE, *op. cit.*, p. 141, and L. -E. HALKIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-4. See also A. ALLARD, *Histoire de la justice criminelle au seizième siècle* (Ghent, Paris and Leipzig, 1868), p. 133; J. J. E. PROOST, *op. cit.*, p. 46, note 2.

⁵ Just as the canons did not form a part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, so, too, the inquisitors were independent of ordinary jurisdiction, whether imperial, papal or episcopal.

⁶ According to certain authors, it was customary to burn the account of the trial with the condemned (A. PIAGET and G. BERTHOUD, *Notes sur le livre des martyrs de Jean Crespin* (Neuchâtel, 1930), pp. 218-20; N. WEISS, *La chambre ardente* (Paris,

different aspects to the activities of the inquisitors. As L. E. Halkin writes, "here, they are really judges, there, they appear as spiritual advisors, more anxious to enlighten the mind of the heretic than to burn his body. At other times, their rôle approximates to that of a jury at our assizes".¹ In short, the inquisitors were at once police and justices, pursuers and reconcilers. But did the prosecution of sorcery come within their competence? The little we know on the matter would seem to indicate that it did not, at least for the Netherlands and in what concerned the essentials of the trial. The inquisitors are insistent on this—their rôle is that of experts who explain and clarify matters for judgment.

We have seen that, contrary to the opinion favoured by the best historians, it was not the end of the sixteenth century which saw the peak period of satanic repression. Rare in the fourteenth century,² already increased during the fifteenth century,³ instances abound from 1530 onwards and the first half of the century is as bloody as the period which extends from 1580 to 1620.⁴ Unfortunately, in the actual state of research, it is impossible to give even an approximate estimate of the number

1889), p. 58). According to others, only the sentence or a copy of it was thus destroyed (C. MOELLER, *op. cit.*, p. 53, note 2).

¹ L. E. HALKIN, *Histoire religieuse des règnes de Corneille de Berghes et de Georges d'Autriche* (Liège and Paris, 1936), pp. 101-4.

² See, for example, the trial in 1304 of Mons-en-Pevèle (near Lille) (J. HANSEN, *Quellen* . . ., pp. 516-17); also A. MOLINIER, "Lettre de rémission pour une femme accusée de sorcellerie" (1354). *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, vol. xliii (1882), p. 419. There are several trials of the fourteenth century in T. DE CAUZONS, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 301-59.

³ The first sorcery trial known in the Netherlands is dated 1408 (E. POULLET, *op. cit.*, p. 278. J. HANSEN, *Quellen* . . ., p. 527). The first burning, 1441; it occurred at Fleurus (Hainaut) (E. BROUETTE, "Procès d'autre fois à Fleurus," *Bulletin de la Société royale paléont. et archéol. de l'arr. jud. de Charleroi*, vol. xiv (1945), p. 51.) There is precise information about the district of Namur; the register of charges of the High Court of Namur, which are complete from 1441 to 1564, contains traces of one sorcery trial only for the fifteenth century, and of forty for the sixteenth.

⁴ We give below some figures concerning the district of Namur which serve to establish our thesis. The number of sorcerers sentenced is as follows: from 1500 to 1535, forty-nine; from 1536 to 1565, a hundred and thirty-three; from 1566 to 1590, twenty-seven; from 1591 to 1620, a hundred and forty-nine; from 1621 to 1650, forty-three. The causes of the fall in numbers during the third period are not clear: loss of archives, postponement of trials in hope of more settled times (the end of the reign of Philip II was a very troubled period for the Netherlands), attention diverted to other things—any or all of these, perhaps. There are parallel statistics in E. VAN DEN BUSCHE, *Analectes pour servir à l'his. de la sorcell. en Flandre* (La Flandre, 1875), p. 320; E. BROUETTE, *Deux étapes* . . ., p. 27, note 6 (for "Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse liégeoise de 1613 à 1659").

of burnings at the stake.¹ It can only be affirmed that few places were spared, and that the cases of collective executions—they were, indeed, mass executions at times—were by no means rare.

Accounts of many of the trials have been published. Those of Gilles de Retz,² of the "vaudois"³ of Arras,⁴ of the abbé Gaufridy and of Madeline Demandoulx⁵ are given in all the memoirs, so that they stand out strikingly against the background of a hundred others. We do not intend to add to the mass of material already published⁶ the multitude of cases, for the most part very similar, which we have met with in archives. We shall content ourselves with giving one—that of Anne de Chantraine, executed as a witch in 1625 in Warêt-la-Chaussée at the age of twenty-two.⁷

¹ This is the opinion of the ABBÉ A. PASTURE (*La restauration religieuse aux Pays-Bas catholiques sous les Archiducs* (Louvain, 1925), p. 53), with which, in view of the knowledge we actually possess, we must agree. Here, however, are some figures which we give with the greatest reserve and conditionally. N. VAN WERVEKE (op. cit., p. 335) estimates the number of trials before the courts of the Duchy of Luxembourg at thirty thousand. L. RAIPONCE (*Essai sur la sorcell.* (Dour, 1894), p. 64, suggests the more moderate figure of fifty thousand executions for Germany, Belgium and France. A. LOUANDRE (*La sorcellerie* (Paris, 1853), p. 124,) says that in the sixteenth century nine hundred sorcerers were punished in Lorraine in the course of fifteen years: five hundred at Geneva in the three months of 1515; and a thousand in the diocese of Como within a year. At Strasbourg, according to J. FRANÇAIS (op. cit., p. 134, note 3), there were twenty-five burnings for sorcery in three years. According to G. Save ("La sorcellerie à Saint-Dié", *Bull. de la Société philomatique vosgienne* (1887-8), pp. 135 ff.), the total of anti-satanic prosecutions for the district of Saint-Dié rose from 1530 to 1629 to two hundred and thirty. For the whole of Lorraine, C. E. DUMONT (*Justice criminelle des duchés de Lorraine* . . . , vol. ii (Nancy, 1848), p. 48) estimates the figure at seven hundred and forty, from 1553 to 1669.

² S. RAINACH, "Gilles de Rais", *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, vol. x (1904), pp. 151-82; L. HERNANDEZ, *Le procès inquisitorial de G. de R.* (Paris, 1921).

³ "Vauderie" is a heresy which originated in the upper valley of the Rhône. But from the fifteenth century the terms *vaudois* and *sorciérs* became synonyms. There is abundant literature on the subject. See F. BOURQUELOT, *Les Vaudois du XV^e siècle*, *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 2^e série, vol. iii (1846), pp. 81-107, J. HANSEN, op. cit., pp. 408-15, SOLDAN-HEPPE, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. i, p. 528; M. SUMMERS, *The Geography of Witchcraft* (London 1927), pp. 475-6; G. SCHNURER, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 365.

⁴ A. DUVERGER, op. cit.

⁵ LORÉDAN, *Un grand procès de sorcellerie au XVII^e siècle: l'abbé Gaufridy et Madeline Demandoulx* (Paris, 1912).

⁶ A complete catalogue of sorcery trials would be a very long work. A bibliography for the French parts of the old Netherlands has been drawn up by F. ROUSSEAU, *Le folklore et les folkloristes wallons* (Brussels, 1921), *passim*, principally pp. 57-62. For Luxembourg, L. GUEUNING, "Bibliogr. du folkl. lux.", *Bull. de l'Institut archéol. de Lux.*, vol. i (1925), p. 30. For a work on a wider geographical scale, and including certain documents from the archives, but finishing at 1528, see FRÉDÉRICQ *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticæ pravitatis Neerlandicae*, 5 vol., 8^{vo} (Ghent and The Hague, 1879-1905). HANSEN, op. cit., pp. 445-613, has listed two hundred and sixty-two cases of sorcery between 1245 and 1540.

⁷ Formerly the "comté de Namur", actually a province of that name, canton d'Eghezée.

This unpublished trial¹ faithfully reflects, we think, the mentality of the people, credulous country-folk believing themselves to be victims of sorcery and called, by chance, to judge a witch or to witness against her. It shows equally the concern of high authorities to administer justice calmly. We shall leave the documents to speak for themselves.²

In conclusion, sorcery, which is one of the most original characteristics of the social and religious history of Europe in the early modern period, should be considered as an outgrowth of contemporary unrest. Sorcery made amazing progress, particularly in country places, whose inhabitants were by nature envious, suspicious and intolerant of people who presumed to rise above their social condition. The conditions which determined its evolution were very different, it would seem, from region to region.

Known statistics show that western Europe paid heavy tribute to satanism. Unfortunately, we lack exhaustive statistics, but it is probable that a complete combing of archives would dispel the exaggerations of certain authors.

Magicians and soothsayers have little place in judicial trials. In general, the tribunals were more lenient to them, reserving the greater severities for those casters of spells whom society looked on as the root of all its evils.

A critical examination of anti-satanic legislation corrects many errors. It is a mistake to consider the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a static period. During the century within whose chronological limits this study lies there was a conscience-crisis which showed itself especially in lay legislation. The first sixty years of the sixteenth century were years of relative anarchy in legislation: on the other hand judicial texts increase and multiply in number and in precision, in the last quarter of the century.

The Church denounced the evil, because it originated in religious matters, and she prosecuted it before the tribunals with the utmost zeal. But her repressive action was shackled by concordats. The action of spiritual legislation, as defined by the Papacy, was limited to preaching and to recommendations made

¹ It is in the *Archives de Namur*, "Greffes scabinaux", Warêt-la-Chaussée, file 33; *Conseil prov.*, corresp. du Procureur Génér., file 119, Reg. aux Sentences, 1620-4.

² See Appendix.

to lay judges. This was no empty letter, and the Councils are full of references to it. The Protestant world did not escape the satanic obsession: very much the contrary.

The secular power guarded society against the power of the spell. At first sight, one is inclined to use a stronger word than severe for its legislation, since it was really draconian. Yet it would have been even more so, had it been left entirely to the discretion of the rural judges. The jurists opposed the rigidity of law to the fanaticism of superstition, the calmness of legislation to the hatred of country folk who were at once judge and litigant. It is remarkable how much care these ordinances take to emphasise the necessity of keeping closely to means sanctioned by law, and to remove from the system practices which were merely superstitious or without juridical warrant. The nomination of specialising judges was a further improvement. Notice, moreover, the possibility of appeal, and the fact, perhaps most astonishing of all, of the prosecution of such officers as were guilty of excess in the discharge of their duties. It is clear proof that the legislation did not remain a dead letter.

The trials were carefully conducted, with a profound desire to learn the truth. Their length is often but a further proof of anxiety to avoid error. It is clear, however, that there was an evolution in this matter also and that the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, in spite of their horrifying statistics, brought greater care and method to the exercise of justice.

The convicted sorcerer was condemned to the flames: it was the only punishment the law knew. But this sentence had much to temper its rigour. The condemned, in the Netherlands, was previously strangled. Again, even after condemnation, the sentence was often commuted to something less severe: banishment, whipping, etc. Both *de facto* and *de jure* acquittals were frequent.

It is superabundantly proved that the expenses of the proceedings were a burden to the Treasury and that the confiscation of the goods of the condemned realised very little. Lust for wealth could not, therefore, have been a motive for repression.

More than ever, the reality of the sabbath remains a burning question. All has not been said when one waxes ironical with Montaigne, La Bruyère and Voltaire, or pontifical with Hugo and

Michelet. But historical erudition is unhappy on this ground of theology and mental pathology, where it can hardly find a footing. Were we to force our scientific knowledge beyond logically justifiable limits, we should be at once more exacting and less competent than the demonologists of the great sixteenth century tide of satanism.

EMILE BROUETTE

APPENDIX

THE TRIAL OF ANNE DE CHANTRAINE (1620-25)

AT THE beginning of March 1620 the *sergent* of the court of Warê-la-Chaussée arrested a girl of seventeen, Anne de Chantraine, who had recently come to live in the village with her father and was reputed to be a witch. She was imprisoned, and soon brought before the Mayor, Thomas Douclet, and the aldermen of the district. She made no bones about relating her deplorable life, and made the most cynical avowals.

The daughter of a travelling merchant of Liège, she scarcely remembered her mother, who had died when Anne was only two years old. Her father placed her in the orphanage of the Soeurs Noires at Liège. The child remained there ten years, and received an education rare for her time and certainly above her station: reading, writing, catechism, needlework. At twelve years old she was placed by the good Sisters with a widow of the city, Christiane de la Chéraille, a second-hand clothier by trade. Anne mended old clothes there the whole day long.

One evening she saw her mistress rub grease on her body as far as her girdle and disappear up the chimney. Before leaving, Christiane de la Chéraille recommended her to do the same, which she forthwith did. Passing up the chimney in a gust of strong wind, she found herself in the company of her patron in a huge hall, filled with many people, in which there was a large table covered with white bread, cakes, roast meats and sausages. There was much joyful feasting and banqueting.

Anne was timidly approaching the table, when a young man, "with a look as of fire", accosted her politely and asked if he could

"have to do with her". Dismayed by this audacity, Anne was much troubled, and she uttered an ejaculatory prayer, accompanying it with the sign of the cross. Immediately table and food, banqueting-room and revellers all disappeared. She found herself alone in the dark, imprisoned among the empty casks of her patron's cellar, from which she was delivered by that same lady the following morning.

This was Anne de Chantraine's first contact with the infernal powers. The contacts which followed were not so furtive, and the awakening of fleshly desire was first occasioned in her through Christiane de la Chéraitte. She then gave herself to the Sabbath with all the violence of her youth. She was present three times a week—on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday—and took part in all the rites: dances *dos-à-dos*, copulation with a demon, adoration of the devil in the form of a goat, etc. She received the magic powder and the power of witchcraft.

Laurent de Chamont, brother-in-law and lover of her mistress, king of the sorcerers in that region, very quickly noticed Anne. He was chief of a group who knew how to take a very practical advantage of their satanic initiation; they entered houses by magic and stole money, vessels, clothes and food. It was Laurent de Chamont who cut hairs from the sexual organs of his own daughter, Anne, and of the children of Christiane de la Chéraitte and, placing them on the palm of his hand, blew them into keyholes; for it was thus, by the help of the devil, that doors of houses and locks of chests were opened.

But the band of nightbirds was soon overtaken. Laurent de Chamont and Christiane de la Chéraitte were burned, and their accomplices were dispersed. Six weeks later Anne was also arrested, and, after being tried, was sentenced to banishment. Leaving the principality of Liège, she came to her father, who had settled at Warêt, but, not daring to remain with him, she hired herself as a milk-maid to a farmer of Erpent, four leagues off—a certain Laurent Streignart, a shady character, who was himself suspected of heresy.

Such were the avowals of Anne de Chantraine, and they sufficed to provoke prosecution. Her trial was immediately put in hand. On 17th March the Mayor of Warêt demanded from the Provincial Council a *procureur* for the accused, and the advocate Martin of Namur was named. But, because of contemporary

troubles, the number of cases under consideration, or the slowness of the judicial machinery, the matter remained for six months in suspense. Anne spent the whole spring of 1620 in the prison of Warêt.

On 13th September the accused was informally examined. That same day, the tribunal decided to send one of its members to Liège to obtain more complete information. This step had grievous results for the accused. Together with the report of the interrogation of Laurent de Chamont and of Christiane de la Chéraitte, the magistrate returned with the evidence of Gaspard José, who was for a few weeks her employer after the arrest of Christiane, and that of Jean Agnus, her accomplice in flights about the city. All of these taxed her with evil-doing, with witchcraft and witch-flights.

Recalled on 9th October, Anne admitted to all the horrors of the accusation, and in particular to having given herself to an unknown man dressed in black, with cloven feet, who appeared to her while she was blaspheming because the heat of the day had dispersed her herd. As a result, she avowed, the cows reassembled of their own accord.

On the fourteenth of the same month two women of the village, and one from Erpent, came forward as witnesses against her. The first said she knew the accused had the reputation of being a witch, and one day, when she felt ill, she was convinced she had been bewitched by Anne. Accordingly she complained to the accused, and Anne prepared some pancakes for her. When she had eaten the first, she began to vomit and immediately felt better. The second witness was a friend of the accused and had received certain confidences from her which she made known to the tribunal—commonplaces about the Sabbath and the magic powders. She could give only one definite fact: one of her children had been poisoned and cured by Anne on the same day. The third witness declared on oath that the prisoner had cured two bewitched children by taking away a spell; but that she had also procured the death of a young girl "who lived two leagues south of Warêt".

The accusations having been established, the clerk of the court of Warêt gave her in charge at Namur, where, a few weeks later, the Provincial Council gave an authorisation for torture "in order to learn more of the misdemeanours of the accused and of her accomplices".

On 5th December the hangman of Namur, Léonard Balzat, proceeded to torture. It was a short and useless session, because, except for some insignificant details, nothing of importance nor any name of an accomplice was revealed. The following day, this sentence was drawn up by the mayoralty: "In view of the confessions of Anne de Chantraine: to having gone over to the devil and given herself up to him: to having had fleshly intercourse with him several times: to having attended thrice a week dances and conventicles of sorcerers and witches: the Court demands that she be condemned to the ordinary punishments of witches, or at least that she be flogged and banished for all time, or suffer any other corporal punishment which the Court may see fit to inflict".

Another questioning took place on 15th February 1621, in the course of which Anne revealed to the judges how Christiane de la Chéraille had taught her to cure the bewitched: "When a poisoned person was brought to her to be cured, she said: 'Devil, do you wish me to remove the poison from this person in whom you have placed it?'—and having said this, she seized him under the arms, turned him one way and then the other, saying the same words and touching the hand of the poisoned person, declaring that he was cured and ending with further curious ritual." She admitted to having received four *sous* for the cure of a girl.

On 15th April Léonard Balzat returned to Warêt. It was decided that the accused should be submitted to the torture of cold and hot water; and two days later the torture was repeated. This time, the torturer poured water which was almost boiling through a funnel placed in her throat, already in a terrible condition. In spite of these two sessions, the judges failed to gain their ends, for Anne de Chantraine did not reveal her accomplices.

Two months passed. On 14th June Léonard Balzat returned, and submitted her to the fearful torture reserved for great criminals and sorcerers. She persisted in her declarations, but nothing more could be found out.

Two days later five witnesses came from Liège to testify on her morals. They were Conrad de Phencenal, from whom she had stolen many tin plates; Anne de Chevron, who had lost linen and jewels; Léonard de Vaulx and his daughter, who brought a theft of 300 florins against her. A young merchant tailor, Wautier Betoren, declared he had been her victim to the extent of a piece

of linen, but that a friend of Anne, a certain Perpennienne, had given him twenty florins by way of indemnity.

Established as she now was as a thief, avowed under torture as a sorceress, her sentence from the council of the province can scarcely astonish us. On 16th July, Guillaume Bodart, the deputy commissioner, brought to the *mairie* sentence of death against her, "for the confessed crime of witchcraft, and for having assisted at several larcenies by night, by means of the same witchcraft, in the houses of citizens in the city of Liège". On 23rd July the sentence was made known to Anne, and she, overwhelmed with despair, denied all her avowals. In this way she gained time, for only confessions freely admitted counted in law.

The embarrassment occasioned to the judges did not last long. As soon as they were informed, the delegates of the provincial Council condemned Anne de Chantraine to death anew, on 26th July, and this condemnation was immediately read to the girl. She was then asked if all the confessions she had made were true, and she said that they were. The clerk of the court and the gaoler then retired, and a religious came to confess her.

Why was the sentence not executed? No document justified such shirking of duty. Had the denials *in extremis* of the condemned moved the magistrates of Warêt? Were motives of law, reasons of *force majeure*, added to the documents we now possess? The whole matter is wrapped in mystery. It remains true that the condemned lived on for almost a year in the scabious village prison. It would seem that she was forgotten.

However, during the winter 1621-2 the Mayor made another visit to Namur. On 9th December he received an answer that "in view of the enquiries held by a deputed commission since the sentence pronounced in the court of Warêt on 21st July, the aldermen should see to it that the said sentence be carried into execution according to due form and tenor". On the following day this new sentence was read to Anne de Chantraine. She said to her confessor, Père Monceau, who accompanied the clerk of the court, that she was content to die for her sins, but that she persisted in her denials.

Again the judges temporised, and months went by without a solution. In the summer of 1642 the Council decided to re-examine the facts avowed by the accused. Two new councillors were appointed, and, in order to facilitate the enquiry, the accused was

taken to Namur, where she was imprisoned in the Tour de Bordial, on the bank of the Sambre, at the foot of the citadel.

Proceedings began again. Did torture again play its part, or had the two years of hopeless imprisonment so weakened the accused that she confessed freely; or did the judges simply ignore her denials? We do not know, for this part of the trial is surrounded with mystery. It would seem that the judges were particularly interested in the sanity of the accused. At the beginning of September they asked the gaoler if he had remarked anything abnormal about Anne. On 12th September he replied that "in daily conversations, the turnkey, his wife and others have not noticed that she is in any way troubled in mind or in judgment".

On the same day the gaoler, armed with scissors and razor, visited her, cut her hair and shaved every part of her body. He took away her clothes, and left only a rough chemise of jute in their place.

But the councillors began to have scruples. They were not content with the gaoler's report, and they recalled him. When questioned again on the mental state of the accused, he was less sure in his answers than he had been. He said that "the prisoner was stupid, and did not understand what she said, though sometimes she seemed quite right in her mind".

On 27th September the accused was exorcised. Doubts were still felt of her sanity. The judges sent for the gaoler's wife, and again asked her if "in dealings and daily conversations with the said prisoner, she had not remarked anything abnormal in her mind and judgment". The woman answered that she had not.

On 17th October the definitive sentence was brought in: death by fire with preliminary strangulation. From that day, Anne was kept at Warêt-la-Chaussée, the place fixed for the execution.

During the following night Léonard Balzat and his assistant prepared the pyre, a huge heap of a hundred faggots bought in the village itself. In the centre, sheaves of straw were placed, and a hollow was made in the straw, large enough to contain a stool.

At dawn Anne was awakened by the gaoler, the clerk of the court and a Friar Minor, who announced the fatal news to her. She was led out. The executioner was waiting with the cart, and the condemned girl climbed into it. When they reached the end

SYNOPTIC TABLE OF PRINCIPAL FACTS

DEMONOLOGICAL LITERATURE	ECCLESIASTICAL MEASURES AGAINST SATANISM
1486: <i>Malleus Maleficarum</i> (Sprenger and Institoris). <i>Expositio . . . preceptum</i> (Beetz).	1484: Bull "Summis Desiderantes."
1508: <i>Liber octo questionum</i> (Trithemius).	1494: Bull "Cum acceperimus."
1510: <i>Quam graviter</i> (van Hoogstraeten).	1536: 1st Council of Cologne.
1564: <i>De practigiis daemonum</i> (Wier).	1548: Council of Trèves.
1579: <i>Traicté enseignant en bref</i> (Benoist).	1550: 1st Council of Cambrai and 2nd Council of Cologne.
1580: <i>De la démonomanie</i> (Boguet).	1565: 2nd Council of Cambrai.
1589: <i>Tractatus de confessionibus</i> (Binsfeld).	1570: 1st Council of Malines.
1591: <i>Discours des sorciers</i> (Boguet).	1574: 1st Council of Tournai.
1595: <i>Disquisitionum magicarum</i> (Del Rio).	1576: 1st Council of Antwerp.
1596: <i>Von Zauberei</i> (Agricola).	1580: 1st Synod of Harderwijk.
1612: <i>Tableau de l'inconstance</i> (De Lancre).	1581: Synod of Arnheim.
1626: <i>Universis theologica</i> (Tanner).	1585: Bull "Coeli et terrae."
1631: <i>Cautio criminalis</i> (Von Spee).	1590: Order of the Bishop of Tournai concerning child sorcerers. Synod of Dordrecht.
1675: <i>Plaidoyez</i> (Hautefeuille).	1594: 1st Synod of Montauban.
	1595: 2nd Synod of Harderwijk.
	1597: Synod of Goes.
	1598: 2nd Synod of Montauban.
	1600: 2nd Council of Tournai.
	1604: 1st Council of Namur.
	1607: 2nd Council of Malines and Synod of La Rochelle.
	1610: Council of Metz and 1st Synod of Assen.
	1612: 2nd Synod of Assen.
	1615: 3rd Synod of Assen, Synod of Zwolle and 2nd Council of Anvers.
	1616: 4th Synod of Assen.
	1618: 5th Synod of Assen and 2nd Council of Liège.
	1619: 6th Synod of Assen.
	1620: 7th Synod of Assen and Synod of Kampen.
	1623: Bull "Omnipotentis Dei."
	1631: 3rd Council of Cambrai.
	1637: Instructions of Urban VIII to ecclesiastical judges.
	1639: 2nd Council of Namur.
	1643: 3rd Council of Anvers and 3rd Council of Tournai.

CITED

SORCERERS SENTENCED
(COMTÉ DE NAMUR 1500-1650)

CIVIL MEASURES AGAINST SATANISM

Burnings	Banish-ments	Various	Sentences unknown	Acquittals	Total
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	1500	—	—	—	—	—
	1505	3	—	—	—	3
1532: Nemesis Carolina.	1510	1	1	—	3	1
	1515	3	—	—	4	3
	1520	7	1	—	3	5
1563: Ordinance by the Provincial Council of Luxemburg concerning the powers of local officials with regard to sorcery.	1525	2	2	1	—	5
	1530	2	2	—	1	3
	1535	—	2	1	2	—
	1540	5	2	1	6	—
	1545	6	4	—	11	2
	1550	11	9	1	8	2
1591: Ordinance of the Provincial Council of Luxemburg concerning sorcery.	1555	4	6	—	13	—
1592: 1st Ordinance of Philip II on the same subject.	1560	11	15	2	5	4
1595: 2nd Ordinance of Philip II on the same subject.	1565	3	2	—	6	2
	1570	5	2	2	—	1
	1575	1	1	—	—	—
	1580	—	—	—	—	—
1606: Archducal Ordinance on the same subject.	1585	3	2	—	3	—
1608: Order of Ernest of Bavaria concerning the activities of sorcerers, and Ordinance of the Provincial Council of Flanders on the same subject.	1590	7	1	—	—	3
1612: Archducal Ordinance concerning child sorcerers.	1595	8	1	—	3	3
	1600	15	2	—	8	3
	1605	18	2	2	6	8
	1610	11	3	2	6	1
	1615	2	5	3	10	6
1623: 1st Ordinance of the Provincial Council of Namur concerning judges experienced in cases of Satanism.	1620	8	5	—	4	—
1630: 2nd Ordinance of the same Council, on the same subject.	1625	4	8	—	1	1
	1630	8	—	1	—	—
	1635	—	—	1	—	—
	1640	1	—	1	2	1
1660: Repetition of the Archducal Ordinance of 1606.	1645	—	—	—	1	—
1682: Ordinance of Louis XIV on the suspension of proceedings against sorcerers.	Totals	149	78	18	106	49
						400

of the village where the pyre was prepared, Anne collected all the strength that remained to her. In a loud voice, she acknowledged her sins, denied that she was a witch, and admitted to no accomplice. Léonard Balzat helped her to climb the pyre, seated her on the stool among the straw and abruptly strangled her. His assistant kindled the straw and the faggots. Acrid smoke quickly enveloped her, and the crackling of the flames was like a fearful whisper through the entire village. The pyre burned for two days. At dawn on the third day the ashes were dispersed to the four winds.

The memory of a young, beautiful and celebrated witch was for many years to haunt the minds of the villagers. Her story was told and re-told by the light of a winter's fire. No one, however, knew her name, and no folklorist recounted her trial. Only F. Chavée, in his *Notice sur le village de Leuze*,¹ speaks of "a field situated between Leuze and Warêt-la-Chausée, made famous by a Liège witch and poisoner whom the justices of the high court of Warêt condemned to death and executed in the year 1623 (*sic*)".

¹ *Annales de la Soc. archéol. de Namur*, vol. xxi (1895), p. 481.

PART IV

THE DEVIL IN ART AND LITERATURE

THE DEVIL IN ART

THE DEVIL, perhaps even more than God, of whom he is simply a worthless imitation, is beyond our imagining. God is One: and, however incommensurable He may be, the human soul, being grounded in unity, tends towards Him, in its aspiration towards Being, as towards its First Principle. But the devil is legion: he cannot reach to such a total unity, and the essence of his condition as the Accursed One, the King of Hell, consists, of necessity, in the infinite distance that separates him from the First Principle of his being. This was the anathema that hurled his blank, disjointed soul into the abyss of Chaos, making him Lord of Hell and sovereign over discord. For this prince of all deformity and heterogeneity feeds insatiably wherever contradiction reigns.

No other sacred book has expressed this characteristic of the devil more powerfully than the *Lalitavistara* describing the assault of Mara, the devil of Tantric Buddhism, on the redeemer Bodhisattva:

“The devil Papiyan [Mara], not having done what Sârt-havana had done, prepared his mighty army, four legion strong and valiant in combat, a fearful army that struck terror into the hearts of all who beheld it, an army such as had never been seen or heard of before, by men or gods. *This army had the power to take on all manner of different appearances, transforming itself endlessly in a hundred million ways.*¹ Its body and hands and feet were wrapped in the coils of a hundred thousand serpents, and in its hands were swords, bows, arrows, pikes, axes, mallets, rockets, pestles, sticks, chains, clubs, discuses, and all other instruments of war. Its body was protected by excellent breast-plates. Its heads and hands and feet turned in all directions. Its eyes and faces were flaming; its stomachs, feet and hands of all shapes. Its faces glittered in terrible splendour; its faces and teeth were of all shapes, its dog-teeth enormous, fearful to behold.

¹ Author's italics.

Its tongues were as rough as mats of hair, its eyes red and glittering, like those of the black serpent full of venom. Some were spitting the venom of serpents, and some, having taken the venom in their hands, were eating it. Some, like the *garudas*, having drawn out of the sea human flesh and blood, feet, hands, heads, livers, entrails and bones, were eating them. Some had bodies of flame, livid, black, bluish, red, yellow; some had misshapen eyes, as hollow as empty wells, inflamed, gouged or squinting; some had eyes that were contorted, glittering, out of shape; some were carrying burning mountains, approaching majestically, mounted on other burning mountains. Some, having torn up trees by their roots, were rushing towards the Bodhisattva. Some had the ears of stags, pigs, elephants—hanging ears or boars' ears. Some had no ears at all. Some, with stomachs like mountains and withered bodies made from a mass of skeleton bones, had broken noses; others had stomachs like rounded jars, feet like the feet of cranes, with skin and flesh and blood all dried up, and their ears and noses, their hands and feet, their eyes and heads all lopped off. . . .

"Some with the skin of oxen, asses, boars, ichneumons, stags, rams, beetles, cats, apes, wolves, and jackals, were spitting snake venom, and—swallowing balls of fire, breathing flame, sending down a rain of brass and molten iron, calling up black clouds, bringing black night and making a great noise—were running towards the Bodhisattva. . . ."

This lengthy extract from a text illustrated with so much colour and brilliance by the painters of Turkestan (cf. pl. 5.) is worth quoting, by way of preface, as a remarkable example of the "demonic style". This fantastic accumulation of ever-changing monstrosities never manages to be more than a sum of so many parts, a mass of fragments that can never be resolved into a unity. Ugliness, plurality, chaos—throughout civilisations most remote from each other in time and in space, these are the characteristics of diabolic art. Being himself unable to create, the lord of all impurity, who fell from grace because, for the space of a single instant, he imagined himself the equal of the demiurge, he tries to practise his delusions by turning himself into the ape of God. Artists have no difficulty in portraying this Prince of

Darkness, for he is more easily represented than God, living on what he can borrow from the faces of God's creatures, and combining, in his impotent rage, the various features in the most absurd manner. Satan creates his monsters from shattered remnants of creatures.

We must not expect to discover the most powerful manifestations of demonic art in the art of the West. In any case, if we spent much time on this branch of our subject we should probably be simply repeating what has already been so pungently stated by René Huyghe in his section of *Amour et Violence* ("Etudes Carmélitaines", 1946). In the irregular, disjointed, chaotic style which he reveals as typical of German art, we can see a clear example of the demonic, even though this is simply the reverse side of the angelic style to which this art aspired—a point which, perhaps, it would be a mistake to underestimate. This oscillation between two extremes, without ever being able to find a proper balancing-point, lies at the very heart of the German soul.

The destiny of western man has centred round the search for unity, and hence for the divine, both within man and outside him; so it is not surprising that he should have achieved so little of an outstanding nature in his representations of the devil. If we restricted ourselves to the figure of the fiend himself, we should find that only Romance art, which in any case is steeped in Orientalism, has produced pictures of any value in this respect. The meekness of the Gospel, spread abroad by St. Bernard and St. Francis, dealt Satan a mortal blow; Gothic art was too profoundly humanised to give adequate representation to him; whilst the Mystery plays helped to transform him into a comic character with childish properties borrowed from the kitchen—his fork and melting-pot, gridiron and long spoon. It is not until the Renaissance that we come across the gloomy monarch in truly demonic guise—for a man like Hieronymus Bosch (in spite of what others may have said about him) is more typical of modern times than of the Middle Ages. In a psycho-analytical study of civilisation the sudden uprush of Satanism in Bosch's paintings would be quoted as a symbol of the first onslaughts made on the faith. Catholic apologists would probably discover in it a premonition of the heresy that was to descend upon the succeeding century. For the historian of ideas, Bosch is symptomatic of the

crisis of unrealism that afflicted the fifteenth century, caught between the faith of mediaeval times and the first beginnings of modern rationalism. In an essay that has since become famous, Huizinga has shown how the later Middle Ages degenerated into a vapid unreality, how all the mediaeval ideals of courtesy and chivalry and the divine became simply shadows of themselves. The same thing happened to the figure who stands in everlasting opposition to these ideals—Satan; and Bosch became the portrayer of this dream of darkness, as Fra Angelico had been the artist of the dream of light. In the pictures of this Dutch artist one finds the genuinely fantastic creations of the ape of God, the forms which the legions of the lower world assume to bring humanity to destruction. To produce these pictures the devil, the Prince of Anomaly, seems to have plunged both hands into the created universe of dead and living forms, including even things created by men, and then hurled the absurd results of his infernal industry in all directions (cf. pl. 19). The monsters thus created, being born of disorder, necessarily carry within themselves malevolent powers: they are the anti-creation, with a frantic desire to degrade the divine workmanship; but the mere name of the one God, uttered by St. Anthony, is sufficient to bring to nought these triumphs of the devil's wiles, these evanescent negations of the divine creation.

The Accursed One makes a melancholy appearance in the middle distance of an engraving by Dürer (cf. pl. 22). As is usual in the German tradition, he is here represented in the form of a pig. There are few pictures of the spirit of evil more striking than this hideous snout skulking behind Death, following a man on horseback, ready to pounce on his victim the moment he shows the slightest sign of weakness. One wonders whether it was thus that the Lord of Hell used to appear to haunt Luther in his nightmares. According to the Faustian tradition, the devil has another incarnation as a dog: in Goethe's work a sinister spaniel goes up and down under Doctor Faust's windows, and it may be the same creature lying at the feet of Dürer's "Melancholy". Then, as a result of the Counter-Reformation, which restored a balance in art, and also under the idealising influence of Raphael and his successors, the devil disappears for several centuries. With "The Miseries of War" he comes to life again in Goya's imagination, and here again it is an animal that stamps the currency of man's

terror of the demonic; but this time it is a goat, the creature that figures in the "Witches' Sabbath" (cf. pl. 21). Delacroix, who was a great reader of *Faust*, also determined to try his hand at the devil, but his imagination was far too literary, and he could do no more than recreate the puppet of the Middle Ages and produce a figure to frighten the children—Mephistopheles, whom Gounod, with that ludicrous incarnation of his, finally reduced to the level of the ridiculous.

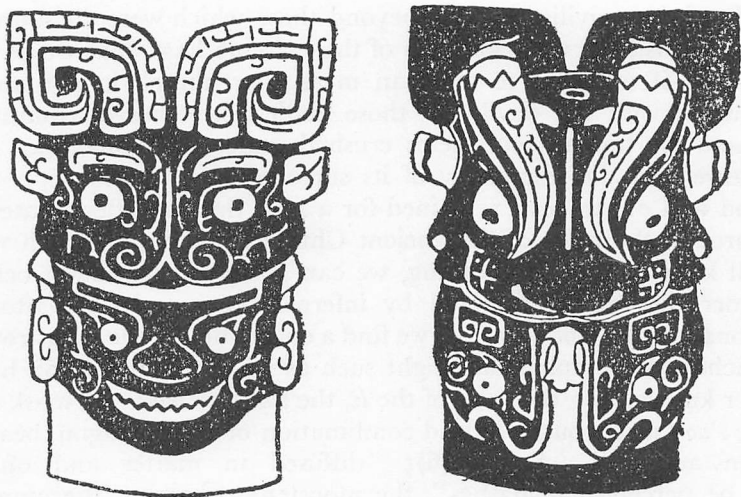
Of all the forms of art, the one most free from diabolic influence was the Greek. The Greek genius salvaged the divine element from the demonic animalism which still surrounds it in the idols of Egypt and Babylon and found the most perfect form in creation to embody it, the only form in which a spark of the divine intelligence shines—Man. Passionately devoted to the task of bringing the multiplicity of the universe, by a great effort of reason, into a unity, and thus reaching beyond the chaos of phenomena to the hidden harmony of the world, the Greek imagination, following the very principles of the structure of creation, operated in a manner that was genuinely divine. The very definition of harmony, given by Archelaus as "the unification of all that is discordant", provides a welcome antithesis to the spirit of diabolism, with its frantic desire to spread discord in the universe.

This result was not, however, achieved without patient effort. The real miracle that the Greeks accomplished lay in their triumph over the slavish state of mind that for centuries had kept man in terrified subjection to the pressure of cosmic forces. The only way man had hoped to give his life some sort of fixed basis in what was no more than a blind play of chance had been by inventing magic rites to create a system of equilibrium by which the beneficent forces in the universe could be attracted down to earth and the forces of evil repulsed, and in early Greek times the image still has its full magical significance as a prophylactic. The vase-drawings, with their black figures, have a kind of frenzied rhythm that comes from the vitality breathed into them by the devil; while on the pediments of their temples there are monsters jeering at the demons in an endeavour to drive them away. But when the luminous figure of Apollo appears on the west front of Olympia, it is a sign that the powers of darkness have been overcome; and from that time onwards the human countenance supplants the monsters and shines out, encircled with divine

brightness, in its full beauty. Goya used to say that when reason sleeps the monsters are born: for thousands of years reason had been in a hypnotic trance and allowed the monsters to go on frightening mankind; but in the fifth century reason came to glorious life and put the monsters to flight. Thanks to the intellectual power of the Word, the Greeks succeeded in exorcising the devil: to chain up the bloodthirsty Erynnyes, they only had to summon the benevolent Eumenides. Most important of all, they were so enamoured of beauty of form that they were able to use this as their strongest weapon to drive the devil back; for he is the antithesis of everything beautiful. The sixth century had had its satanic aspect. On the ornaments of the temples, acting as a sort of lightning-conductor to keep away the evil spirit she represented, appeared the horrible face of the Gorgon: her ugly grin leers out at you from the pediment of the temple to Artemis Gorgo, at Corfu. Often, on the sides of the black-figured vases, she can be seen in flight, like a locust out of Hades, with Perseus—a very different figure from the proud hero of the classical age—in flight before her. Perseus himself is a figure as frightening as a Tibetan devil, with his flat nose, staring eyes, wide-open mouth, boar-tusks and lolling tongue (cf. pl. 6). But with the revelation of the fifth century, the death-dealing face of the Gorgon retreats into the background, her demonic face transformed into a beautiful countenance smiling at Perseus and trying to capture him, no longer by its horror but by its charm (cf. pl. 7).

The devil's real home is the East. There, for the first time, the spirit of evil is personified as a mighty opponent of the spirit of good in the dualistic systems of Mazda and the Jews and Islam, who imagined him as a dark "double" of God, either, like Him, uncreated, or a creature who had fallen from grace. However, as these philosophic religions were opposed to the making of images, the person of the devil was given no artistic representation. It needed Christianity, with the plastic imagination it had inherited from the Greeks, before any attempt could be made to embody him out of his abstraction. But the Christian artists borrowed his features from Assyrio-Babylonian demonology. The bronze statuette of the demon Pazuzu, who appears even in the seventh century B.C. symbolised as the south-west wind bringing fever and delirium, has all the characteristics of the devil of the

Judeo-Christian tradition as he is to be seen on the wooden panels of our cathedrals and in our illuminated manuscripts (cf. pl. 2). The Mesopotamians, more haunted by the problem of evil than their neighbours the Egyptians, felt their destiny threatened by malevolent spirits which they tried to conjure away by means of magic rites. The presence of a demonic spirit can be felt deep down in the minds of the Assyrian despots who for centuries spread terror in Asia, feeding on hecatombs and tortures. For the taste for blood is one of the most undeniable signs of the



CHANG-YIN PERIOD (14th-12th cent. B.C.). Finial ornaments in the form of grotesque faces. Note the T'ao-T'ie mask.

presence of the Evil One. It is worth noticing that these old representations of the face of the devil already bear all the characteristic signs of the diabolic art whose principles we are trying to establish, for it is composed of heterogeneous elements taken from the animal kingdom, which, compared with the gods (whose faces are human), are no better than abortions.¹ The Egyptians,

¹ Dr. Contenau remarks that "on a great number of specimens there is a deep furrow running from the bridge of the nose, across the cranium, as far as the occiput. The Babylonians," he goes on, "are acquainted with the word 'dual', using it of those organs of the body which appear in pairs—the eyes, ears, etc. But they also apply it to the face, believing it to be made up of two similar halves. The way in which sculptors treated the heads of demons reflects this belief: the artist seems to have wanted to indicate the incomplete nature of the union between the two beings who

who were profoundly humanised—they seem to have been the first civilisation to conceive of a myth of redemption—paid practically no attention to the devil-world. Though they were more inclined than the Chaldeans and the Assyrio-Babylonians to see God in terms of naturalistic animal powers, they nevertheless rose far above mere bestiality by the serenity which they engrafted upon it. In contrast with Mesopotamian art, which was harsh and tragic, the art of Egypt, with its profound tendency towards unity, is the first pointer towards the harmony of the Greeks.

But it is to civilisations far beyond those which were the source of our own, the vast countries of the extreme East, that we have to look if we want to see man measuring himself in a titanic struggle with the devil. In those endless stretches of country, where the human soul seems crushed under the exuberance of nature and the immensity of its surroundings, the concepts of God and of the devil remained for a long time undifferentiated. Through the mists of the ancient Chinese religion, of which we still know practically nothing, we can glimpse a humanity bent under the burden imposed by infernal powers. In the ritual bronzes of the Chow period, we find a conception of the monstrous reaching a metaphysical height such as no other civilisation has ever known. On the sides of the *li*, the *lien*, the *touei*, the mask of the *t'ao-t'ie* juts out, a hybrid combination of tiger, dragon, bear, ram and owl (cf. pl. 16); "diffused in matter and only to be perceived in flashes", the monster symbolises "the omnipresence of a mystery always on the point of dissolving into terror". "Two generations, convulsed by bloody tyranny (let us remember, behind the purifying influence of Confucius, the history of the warrior kingdoms and the opening years of Ts'in), can see nothing, when they attempt to fathom their destiny, except the threatening mask of *t'ao-t'ie* in the bosom of a cloud."¹ Under the hegemony of "the wild beast of Ts'in" the history of China can be summarised in a list of executions: in 331—80,000; in 318—82,000; in 312—80,000; in 307—60,000; in 293—240,000; in 275—40,000; in 274—150,000: finally, in 260, the record—400,000 (and yet their lives were supposed to be safe, unless they were

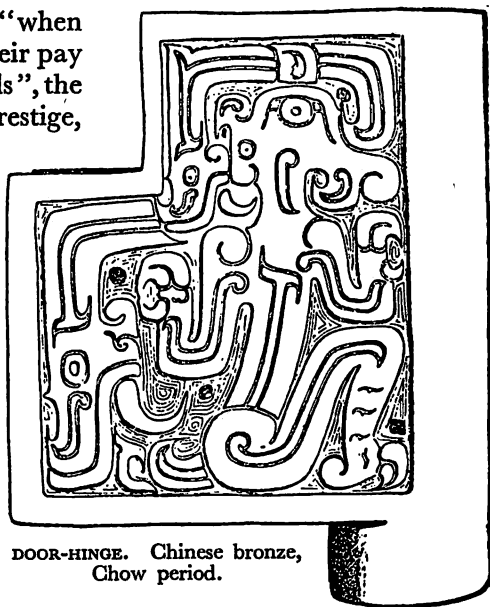
form the creature, the malformation of the demons, even in their physical appearance." Cf. DR. J. CONTENAU, *Le Magie chez les Assyriens et les Babyloniens*, p. 98.

¹ RENÉ GROUSSET, *Les Civilisations de l'Orient*, vol. iii; *Histoire de la Chine*, pp. 31 and 36.

enemies). In those days, "when soldiers only received their pay if they produced the heads", the leaders, to raise their prestige, "did not hesitate to throw the vanquished enemy into boiling cauldrons and then drink the dreadful mixture—or, better still, force the victims' parents to drink it".¹ Here, just as in Dürer's engraving, Death walks hand in hand with his accomplice, the devil.

Chinese art, at the time of these sanguinary events, was animated by a rhythm genuinely diabolic. On the sides of their vases geometrical elements are juxtaposed like the fragments of a broken labyrinth or the folded coils of a truncated reptile, and yet this arabesque never creates a unity out of these scattered remnants. It is a cosmos in dissolution, even though its primordial order can be perceived behind the centripetal force that shatters its separate forms (cf. pl. 15).

To this land drenched with blood the Buddhist missionaries brought the gentleness of Kwan-yin and the smiling benevolence of the Bodhisattvas. The demonic style, and the brutal force that goes with it, passed on to another section of Asia, which had more recently emerged from the limbo of prehistory: it conquered Japan. Though at the time of Nara serenity may shine out in the countenance of the divine Maitreya, nevertheless, the "celestial emperors", whose mission is to guard the Buddhist paradise against the attacks of earth and hell, reflect the demonic cruelty of the Samurai. So strong is the diabolic tendency that this benevolent spirit has all the facial characteristics of the devil. The Shitenno of Nara (cf. pl. 9) shows a very strange



DOOR-HINGE. Chinese bronze,
Chow period.

¹ RENÉ GROUSSET, *Histoire de la Chine*, p. 48.

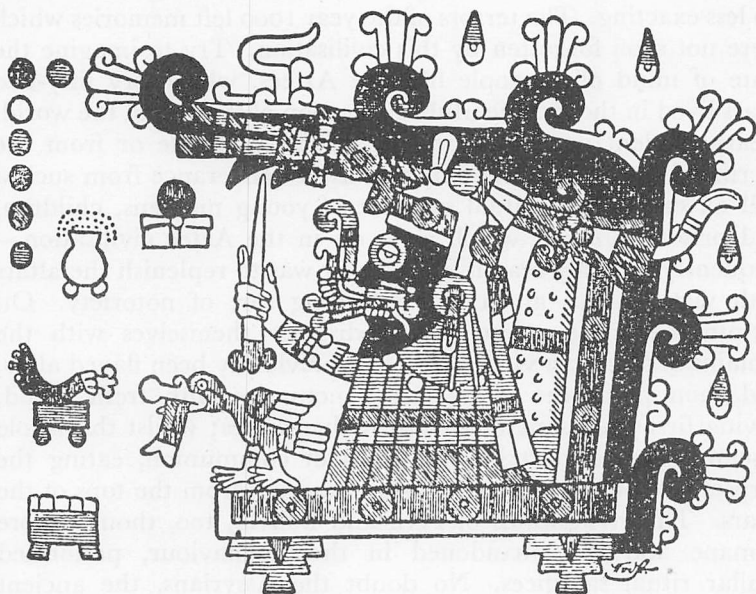
iconographic relationship with a devil of Vézelay, who might be his younger brother: they have the same flaming hair, the same dilated eyes, and the same jaws open in a cry of terror. This is a very puzzling meeting to find between demonic inspiration from two extremes of the civilised world. But the terrifying power of the Japanese masterpiece leaves the little Romance puppet far behind—it could only frighten simple souls like children, on a Punch and Judy stage.

India, which gave birth to the gospel of Buddhism, investigated the problem of evil more profoundly and more intensely than any other civilisation. In the iconography of India there are very few figures which, properly speaking, can be described as demonic, even though the return to barbarism, signified by Hinduism (which was a degenerate form of Buddhism), often brings the demonic smell to our nostrils. And there is certainly some sort of demonic influence in the inorganic chaos that proliferates all over the temples of later times. For this proliferation is the very image of that endless variety of form found in the material universe, to which all beings, even the gods, are condemned, and in which the thinkers of India saw the very principle of evil. More than any other people, they emphasised the beneficent power of the one and the curse inherent in multiplicity. By what was perhaps the boldest metaphysical effort that human thought has ever made, Brahmanism tried to resolve the eternal dualism in one grandiose myth—the myth of the terrible Siva, both god and devil, mystic lover and seeker after blood, obsessed by the will to destroy and yet frantic to create: a cosmic myth, which raises evil from the level of appearance to a level of transcendental reality at which it becomes transformed into the highest good.

Though China seems originally to have been at the mercy of demonic forces, nevertheless under the influence of the later philosophers a humanism developed which had the effect of tempering these violent instincts—at least as much as was possible in a land as fierce as Asia. There was another part of the world where demonism flourished—a strange continent which followed a lonely destiny on this globe of ours, peopled by races who were brought into sudden prominence, for a moment of prehistorical time, by a brutal conquest, and then hurled back into nothingness. Here God was always portrayed in exactly

the same way as the devil; and in no other country has the sign of blood, which is the sign of Satan, shone out so clearly. It is the land of America. In no other part of the world has a civilised section of mankind remained for so long cowering under the terror of superterrestrial forces; nowhere does man seem to have had a more tragic sense of the precariousness of his position in a world in which he feels an utter stranger. He is placed on earth simply to pay a toll of blood to divine powers who are athirst for it: even the sun must have a daily ration of human sacrifice if he is to consent to continue on his journey. Tlaloc, the god of rain, is no less exacting. The terrors of the year 1000 left memories which were not soon forgotten by this civilisation. Try to imagine the state of mind of a people like the Aztecs, who every fifty-two years lived in the most fearful expectation of the end of the world. Death, violent death—the death gained in battle or from the sacrificial knife—was the only means of deliverance from such a hell on earth. The ritual sacrifice of young maidens, children, and prisoners-of-war which went on in the Aztec civilisation—frequently the only reason for fighting was to replenish the altars with victims—has given it a sickening sort of notoriety. On certain feasts the priests would disguise themselves with the remains of a human victim who had previously been flayed alive, and then paint the altars and sanctuaries with fresh blood, having first been sanctified with it themselves; whilst the whole assembly would partake of a kind of communion, eating the corpses that were thrown down in hundreds from the tops of the altars. The civilisations of Peru and Bolivia, too, though more humane and less abandoned in their behaviour, performed similar ritual sacrifices. No doubt the Assyrians, the ancient Chinese and the Christian conquistadores—who were more wantonly cruel than the Indians whose customs so deeply horrified them—showed even greater contempt for human life; but no other fully-evolved civilisation has made death the first principle of a whole system of cosmology, magic and religion—as though the existence of the species could only be ensured in this terrible universe at the cost of sacrificing a large proportion of its representatives; even those who were destined to go on living being obliged to pay the same terrible toll by making blood gush from their ears or dragging a thin cord, covered with thorns, through a hole pierced in their tongue.

Peruvian works of art undoubtedly show signs of humanitarian influence. Even though the face of the lord of creation usually appears distorted and deformed on the Chimu potteries, there are some which achieve a nobility comparable to the finest portraits of the *Quattrocento*. But no breath of humanity ever reached the images of Central America. The gods portrayed by the Mayas, the Toltecs and the Aztecs are monsters, and the men are made in the image of the gods (cf. pls. 13 and 14). No other art has managed to produce such powerful symbols of the in-



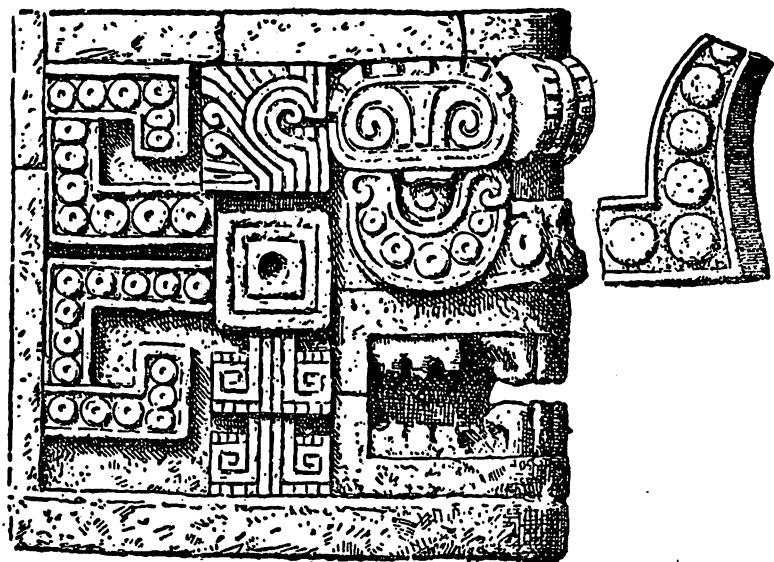
TLALOC, THE MEXICAN RAIN-GOD. (MS. drawing).

humanity of a hostile universe, or created such images of the demonic power which for primitive man is the driving-force of the world.

The strange formal structure in pre-Columbian works provides a mixed conglomeration of elements, overlapping one into another without any sort of continuity (cf. pl. 8). The key to all this is to be found in the Aztec system of hieroglyphics. Mexican writing was quite different from the Egyptian system, with its rows of picture-words and ideograms arranged in a rational sequence, for it combined all these signs together in a way that

produced veritable conundrums. This kind of writing is typical of the "pre-logical" stage of primitive thought, when the mind, still incapable of the deductive process which breaks things down by analysis and then reconstructs them into a synthesis, can only apprehend the world in a sort of global fashion as a complex of events that are unconnected and yet simultaneous. The introduction of a principle of continuity, an order of succession, into the chaos of phenomena, is an achievement of rational thought, with its power of projecting intellectual lines of force into the discordant multiplicity of the world. This intellectual gift—which constitutes the divine element in man—is to be found in the Egyptians and Chaldeans; it is manifested in their art quite unconsciously—with the Greeks it became conscious—as a realisation of certain unifying principles governing the various structural elements that determine the composition of a work of art and ordering them according to the laws of rhythm and harmony and balance. In an Egyptian bas-relief all the various poses are linked together to give them the continuity of an arabesque; even the shapes of Egyptian and Sumerian monsters are the result of a rational choice, their arrangement being decided, in the case of the Egyptians, in accordance with an architectural principle of proportion and for the Mesopotamians by an internal formal law. There is no linear continuity for the eye to follow in an Aztec bas-relief: its unity is continually being destroyed by sudden breaks which turn it into a chaotic medley of forms taken from every order of nature, the only rhythm running through these forms being like the rhythm of certain savage dances that are made up of a series of frenzied tremblings of the body—a kind of "seismic" rhythm, brute energy in action, ungoverned by any intellectual principle. We know enough about Mexican cosmological thought to realise that for the Aztecs the universe was a truly demonic medium of existence with no organic homogeneity. Consequently for them evolution did not take place as the result of any process of becoming but simply through sudden, quite arbitrary changes. It is obvious how easily such a conception could lead to pessimism (the oration made to celebrate the birth of a man into the world was always a chant of woe), for optimism develops in man when he feels it possible to order his life in a settled environment, in which a periodic repetition of events occurs according to fixed laws.

There is nothing analogous to this strange art of the America of pre-Columbian times except in early Chinese bronzes (cf. pls. 16 and 17). The similarity is indeed puzzling, for at times the two become absolutely identical—thus raising one of the most mysterious problems in the history of art. Some people have tried to find historical or ethnological reasons for this aesthetic parallel, but in the present embryonic state of our knowledge about the American continent—whose archaeological sites were until recently continually being ransacked by treasure-



MASK OF TLALOC THE RAIN-GOD. Casas de las Monjas, Chichen-Itza (Yucatan).

hunters, to the great detriment of science—most scientists have wisely abandoned the attractive hypothesis of a “wrecked junk” or the idea of an Asiatic migration by way of the Behring Straits. In any case—and this fact is often forgotten—the artistic works of the two civilisations, though they manifest such strong affinities, are separated by several centuries. Possibly the simple truth is that similar conditions of life—and also, perhaps, a common remote ancestry—may have created similar effects at different points in time and space.

In our comparison of the various artistic civilisations we have

seen that those of the West have been less dominated by the diabolic style than any of the others. Occasionally, however, Western artists have adopted this style by instinct, in order to represent hell as a sort of chaos. There is the unknown person, for instance, who, towards the end of the thirteenth century, created the wonderful mosaics in the Baptistry at Florence, far more important as the precursors of a new art than the work of Cimabue, which is still totally involved in Byzantine formalism (cf. pl. 18).

The fact that the West has shown so little aptitude for demonology in art makes its sudden reappearance in our own time a matter of particular concern. In the early years of 1900, in the middle of the triumphant festivities and noisy jubilations of the peoples of the West, all quite intoxicated at the thought of the coming century of Progress in which man's final happiness was to be realised, the authentic face of the Prince of Discord appears with the effect of a thunderclap. This time Satan chooses to make his appearance in negro masks, and in Picasso's "Demoiselles d'Avignon" (1907) his grin leers out in prophecy of the bestiality which was to be unleashed upon the world a few years later. But in those days nobody took any notice: the picture was looked upon simply as an artistic joke, or even as a piece of intentional mystification. Thirty years later, the same prophetic genius, inspired by the civil war that was devastating his own country, Spain, conceived, in "Guernica" (1936), the callous disintegration of the human countenance which preceded in painting the frightful outrage that man was about to perpetrate upon himself in fact. These recent pictures by Picasso, which took people by surprise and even caused a great deal of scandal, bear all the marks of the diabolic spirit, now engaged in an attack on the masterpiece of Creation itself (cf. pl. 20). Picasso takes all the separate features of the human face, which has burst into fragments as though under the effect of a high explosive, and puts them together again, but according to no principle except that of incongruity. These leering puzzles are perhaps the most typical examples that can be found of that chaotic discontinuity, that hatred of all unity, which seems to be the very essence of the demonic style. I know that if Picasso were asked about this he would maintain that he had been guided in these works by one consideration only: the search for beauty. But that is exactly

the diabolic claim. "Quis ut Deus?" cried St. Michael, felling the Prince of Pride with a sudden flash of light.

Moreover, there is a whole area of modern art with its own special idiom, and this idiom is the stylised chaos that is typical of the demonic. The originators of this destructive process believed in all good faith that they were being guided by a "constructivist" instinct—but is not this very deception one of the evil Spirit's well-known ruses? As for diabolic imagery, it flourishes again in Surrealism, which, far more adeptly than Bosch, produces monsters from separate bits and pieces taken from every branch of the natural order and every element in human industry. Unnatural creation is Satan's prerogative.

After the idyllic naturalism of the nineteenth century, artists have unconsciously been driven to express the anguish of a world shaken by one of the most violent onslaughts of evil that mankind has had to endure. The red constellation which is the sign of Satan has reappeared on the horizon. The death-roll of Assyria, China and the Aztecs has been passed and now bodies are being heaped up in millions round the altars to the evil one. Modern man has outdone his predecessors in ferocity. The lampshades made from human skin that were found in Buchenwald are more devilish than the human brew on which the Ts'ing generals feasted or the flayed remains with which the Aztecs disguised themselves: these had at least the excuse that they formed part of a magic ritual. Never before has Satan had such powerful means at his disposal: he now has his death-factories, laboratories of suffering in which human nature can be tortured, disfigured and degraded—that human nature which, like him, was created in the image of God, but which, unlike him, has kept the faculty to aspire towards the supreme Good, the divine Unity.

Primitive man lived in terror of cosmic forces that were always about to be unloosed upon him. Modern man, having, thanks to science, mastered nature, has freed himself from fear. But it is a brief illusion, for now we are entering upon a time comparable with the darkest periods of human history; and we tremble with anxiety under the threat of a catastrophe whose cause no longer lies in the nature of things but in ourselves. Dispossessed of nature, his former kingdom, Lucifer now seems to have installed himself at the very centre of human intelligence, which has been far too ready to put itself on a level with God, playing with

the forces it has mastered without having the humility to admit that the total chain of cause and effect must always remain beyond its comprehension. Modern science is many-sided, and the knowledge it embraces far greater than any single human being could ever possibly absorb. The question is, does this prodigious sum of knowledge bring us nearer to God, or does it take us farther away from Him, and from that Unity, that state of Absolute Being, from which Satan, the Arch-Enemy, has for ever been excluded?

GERMAIN BAZIN

THE DEVIL IN THE DIVINE COMEDY

IN SPITE of the title of his poem, a title not given to it by himself, the characters Dante portrayed were not divine but human beings. To all intents and purposes his epic is a Human Comedy,¹ even though its scene is the other world. That did not prevent Dante from giving a part to angels in heaven and demons in hell, as befitted his chosen scenario.

What was his conception of these demons, and, in particular, how did he portray Lucifer, the prince of demons?

Those are the questions we shall deal with here.

I

Dante's ideas on demons follow those supplied by the traditional Christian interpretation of the Apocalypse.² The demons, according to him, are "intelligences exiled from their celestial home-country",³ "outcasts of heaven"⁴ who fell from it like falling rain.⁵ As soon as they were created they had to go through a test, to ensure their free entry into the friendship of God. In the theology lesson Beatrice gives Dante in Canto xxix of the *Paradiso* she tells him that the test only lasted a few seconds.⁶ The fall of Lucifer⁷ and the other angels who joined in his revolt⁸ was the result of pride. These fallen angels—"black" angels⁹—are the

¹ The neglected name was straying about like a dog without a master till at last Balzac picked it up and gave it to a work of his own.

² Cf. Apoc. xii, 7 ff.

³ So he defines them in the *Convivio*, iii, beginning of c. 13.

⁴ *Inf.*, ix, 91; cf. vii, 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, viii, 83.

⁶ *Par.*, xxix, 49 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xxix, 57 ff.

⁸ Besides the rebellious angels who became devils, Dante also believed in the existence of angels who remained neutral, whom he places in the ante-room of hell (*Inf.*, iii, 37 ff.). But the idea did not originate with him. It can be found as early as the eleventh century in the legend of St. Brendan, and in the *Parsival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach (1220). Cf. A. GRAF, "La demonologia di Dante", in *Miti e leggende*, vol. ii, p. 83 and note 23, p. 119. "La demonologia di Dante" first appeared in the *Gior. Stor. di Lett. it.*, ix.

⁹ *Inf.*, xxi, 29; xxiii, 131; xxvii, 113.

demons properly so-called. It is with them that this essay is concerned.¹

Before Dante there stretches a whole tradition with an established idea of what the devils were like and an accepted picture of hell. The demons—fierce, grotesque executioners—are charged with the torture of the damned. As the fancy takes them, they boil them in cauldrons, roast them on spits, fry them, or slice them up across and lengthways. The hell of Dante's forebears is a torture-chamber in which childish imagination has been let loose, with no rules, no principles, no scheme behind its choice of details. Coarse popular imagery, this, designed to terrify but to provoke laughter, too. The two aspects go together, explained by a sort of rudimentary theology: everything that degrades the devils is good, so it is right to make them ridiculous. At the same time they have got to be frightening, so that Christians may beware of them. How at the same time mock and fear them, gibe and tremble? The explanation is that the mocker and the trembler are not the same person. Fear of the devil is a help for the hesitating—every man sometimes has within him a faint-hearted Christian whom pure love is not enough to sway. But when a man's soul is united to the power of God, what has he to fear? For him this ontological mockery of the demons is a very proper nourishment for what might be termed mystic hilarity.

¹ The guardians of hell are not demons in the sense in which the word is interchangeable with devil. Dante uses the word "devil" six times in the *Divine Comedy* and each time applies it to fallen angels. The term "demon" is more general and less exact. Socrates used it for the kind spirit which, he thought, used to warn him of evil. In the Middle Ages they called the pagan gods demons. One of the bad Popes was accused of invoking—when throwing dice—the help of Jupiter, Venus, "ceterorumque demonum". In classic mythology the word "demon" was applied to the beings half-way between gods and men. In the *Chansons de Geste* people like Nero and Pilate are included among the demons. In Giacomo da Verona's *De Babilonia civitate infernali*, Mahomet is a demon. (For details see A. GRAF, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 86 ff. and p. 124, note 64.)

Dante, who normally applies the word demon to devils, uses it on one occasion for a damned soul (*Inf.*, xxx, 117). Twice he gives it to guardians of hell, once to Charon and once to Cerberus (*Ibid.*, iii, 109 and vi, 32) but this does not mean that we are to regard these guardians as genuine devils. Besides, if Dante had meant to conceal devils under the appearance of these mythical characters, he would not, as he did, have recalled the deeds of their past lives—precisely such deeds as put them in a different category from fallen angels.

We have even more grounds for thinking this of the *assistant* guardians. These are not even legendary figures but animals, monsters, harpies and centaurs (*Ibid.*, xii and xiii). Admittedly Dante gives us one rapid vision of the devil in the form of a serpent, but this is a definite reference to the passage in the Bible about original sin (*Purg.*, viii, 97 ff.).

This point of view was taken up by Dante—but with modifications. In the *Divine Comedy* the proportion of diabolical slapstick is greatly reduced. It only comes into the scenes of quarrelling devils at Malebolge¹—the one episode in which the devils are protagonists and our interest is permitted to dwell on them: the poet-theologian grants us a moment's distraction, the virtuoso introduces a variation, we come on a pencil sketch on the edge of a deep and austere work of art. Apart from that, the demons do not especially engage our attention, which Dante wishes to turn exclusively to the damned.²

In hell itself the demons carry out their tasks like anonymous officials: they are the arm of divine justice. Thus we meet them in the second chasm of the eighth circle, scourging the panders, who were condemned to walk round and round it.³ Similarly in the ninth chasm their job is to split down the middle, as they go by, those who have divided Christianity.⁴ In each case Dante barely indicates the action and is far from taking the opportunity to wallow in details. The demons have no personality, they are robot demons, supers who do their job almost without appearing on the stage.

Also—and here Dante is making a break with the existing literary tradition—most of the damned are not tormented by demons. Instead of being given up to the whims of torturers, they undergo a punishment marked out with precision, corresponding

¹ *Inf.*, xxi and xxii.

² One other episode might be included—though it could hardly be called amusing—in which the demons' activity is described in some measure for its own sake: the story of their obstruction of the gate of Dis.

³ "On this side, on that, along the hideous stone, I saw horned demons with large scourges, who smote them fiercely from behind.

"Ah! how they made them lift their legs at the first strokes! truly none waited for the second or the third."

(*Inf.*, xviii, 34 ff. trans. in Dent's 1937 ed.)

⁴ "Even as cask, through loss of middle-piece or cant, yawns not so wide as one I saw, ripped from the chin down to the part that utters vilest sound:

"between his legs the entrails hung; the pluck appeared, and the wretched sack that makes excrement of what it swallowed.

"Whilst I stood all occupied in seeing him, he looked at me, and with his hands opened his breast saying: 'Now see how I dilacerate myself, see how Mahomet is mangled! Before me Ali weeping goes, cleft in the face from chin to forelock;

"and all the others, whom thou seest here, were in their lifetime sowers of scandal and of schism; and therefore are they thus cleft.

"A devil is here behind, who splits us thus cruelly, reapplying each of this class to his sword's edge, when we have wandered round the doleful road; for the wounds heal up ere any goes again before him.'" (*Inf.*, xxviii, 22 ff.)

to their crime, the execution of which is usually confined to themselves, or else to animals or natural forces.

Dante gives us no information as to the dispositions, knowledge or sufferings of the demons in hell. He may have deliberately refrained from painting the devils in detail, so as not to take away from his main subject.

As for the demons *outside* hell, we are told quite a lot about their character and the part they play.

They are endowed with a will that always seeks evil;¹ they are each other's enemies;² they are liars;³ they try to catch souls with the bait of false pleasures.⁴ They attack the good everywhere.⁵ When a preacher instead of teaching the Gospel tries to exalt himself or to be funny, it is because there is a devil lurking in the peak of his hood.⁶

The *Divine Comedy* gives us three typical examples of the devil's intervention at the hour of death. The first anecdote is about Guido di Montefeltro.⁷ This warrior, whose activities had been foxy rather than leonine, became a monk to expiate his sins and thus piously would he have ended his life had he not been led back to his perfidious ways. According to what he is supposed to have told Dante, Boniface VIII appealed to Guido to help him confound the Colonnas. At first he refused. Then, on the assurance that the Pope could absolve him in advance from the sin he was about to commit, he finally gave the successful advice to make but not keep a certain promise. When he died Francis of Assisi came to fetch his soul, but in vain. Guido was easily proved guilty by a black cherub, on the ground that a man cannot be absolved from a sin he does not repent and therefore cannot at the same time will sin and absolution, "per la contradizzion che nol consente". The devil ended up, to Guido, "Ah! you never knew I was a logician!"

The second example concerns his son, Buonconte di Montefeltro.⁸ Buonconte was killed at the battle of Campaldino in 1289 and his body was never found. This was because as he was dying

¹ *Inf.*, xxiii, 16; *Purg.*, v, 112.

² *Inf.*, xxii, 132 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, xxiii, 144.

⁴ *Purg.*, xiv, 146.

⁵ Dante calls the devil "the adversary" four times: *Inf.*, viii, 115; *Purg.*, viii, 95; xi, 20; xiv, 146.

⁶ *Par.*, xxix, 118.

⁷ *Inf.*, xxix.

⁸ *Purg.*, v.

the sinner was inspired to call on our Lady. That saved him: when the devil came to take possession of his soul an angel snatched it away from him. The devil, enraged, cried, "O you from heaven, why are you doing me out of my right? Was one small tear enough to rob me of my prey? Very well, so be it! At all events I can do what I like with his body"—and using the strength that belongs to his nature,¹ the devil stirred up a violent storm and swept Buonconte's unburied body down the Arno.

The third example is outstandingly odd.² Given that in a state of grace God lives supernaturally within us, working in and through us, the idea easily follows that in a state of sin it is the devil who lives in us. The next stage is possession and by going a bit further one reaches Dante's fabulous notion—why should not the devil continue to use a man after he is dead? No one would suspect that he was dealing with a corpse. This was the fate of Branca d'Oria and his father-in-law, Michel Zanche. "They are here with us in hell", says one of the damned to Dante. "What's that? What are you saying? Don't be absurd—d'Oria is still alive, eating, drinking, sleeping, wearing clothes . . ."³ "No, d'Oria's body is animated by a devil, who makes him talk and move just as if it were his soul."

What more striking way could there be of demonstrating what it means to be given up to the devil by sin? This flight of fancy was not Dante's own. We find it in a number of earlier authors,⁴ just as we find the theme of angel and devil fighting over a corpse.⁵ So far, then, there is nothing to show that Dante had any original views on matters diabolical. Up to this point his demonology is a summary, an outline. Not only has he made no effort to produce anything new about the psychology of demons, but, as if to avoid the rocks on which the imagination of his predecessors foundered,

¹ *Purg.*, v, 114.

² *Inf.*, xxxiii.

³ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁴ Cesarius of Heisterbach tells of a cleric "*cujus corpus diabolus loco animae vegetabat*". In choir this monk's voice was strange and bewitching. One day a saint heard him and said: "That is not the voice of a man, it is the voice of a demon." The monk was exorcised, the demon came out and the corpse fell to the ground. The idea is very old. Cf. A. GRAF, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 ff., for references and further examples.

⁵ Polish folklore has it that every man has an angel and a devil at the foot of his bed, making a record of his actions. If he wakes up, having forgotten his prayers the night before, and says an Our Father, the devil has to rub out the entry in his record with his tongue. Cf. D'ANCONA, *Scritti danteschi* (Florence), p. 35. The fight for a soul between the devil and the angels is, or rather was, shown in a painting by Orcagna—influenced by Dante, no doubt—in the Campo Santo at Pisa.

he seems to have done his best to get out of describing demons altogether. He replaces them, where he can, by animals and monsters, or by mythological characters who are already fitted out with both history and physiognomy.

Only when Lucifer himself comes on the scene does Dante begin to show interest in the devil and give us a new conception of his character.

II

Lucifer is the name of the demon prince. It is Dante's favourite name for him,¹ but he also calls him Satan,² Beelzebub³ and Dis.⁴

Dante agrees with orthodox theology that Lucifer fell from heaven⁵ and takes from the Apocalypse the fact that this fall brought him down to earth.⁶ It was his own idea that there was such a close link between the drama in Paradise and the present condition of the earth.

Let us imagine this globe fixed at the centre of creation, with its austral hemisphere (as we will call it here, for convenience' sake) facing the point of the Empyrean, the throne of God. This hemisphere used to be the solid one, the other being completely covered in water. When Lucifer landed on the earth it was so frightened by the approach of such a monstrosity that it fled of its own accord under the waters, leaving an ocean in its place.⁷ More land came out on the other hemisphere, to compensate. In a moment the face of the globe was changed and the part furthest from God, the boreal hemisphere, became habitable—as far as Dante was aware, in fact, it was the only inhabited part of the earth.

Falling head first on to our world, Lucifer went in as far as the centre and there stopped, unable to fall further. At once a mass of earth shrank back all round the reprobate and, retreating along the path by which Lucifer's fall had brought him, formed a vast bulge in the waters of the austral hemisphere—the mountain of purgatory.⁸

¹ *Inf.*, xxxi, 143; xxxiv, 89.

² *Ibid.*, vii, 1.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxiv, 127.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xi, 65; xii, 39; xxxiv, 20.

⁵ Lucifer's fall is mentioned in *Inf.*, xxxiv, 121-6; *Purg.*, xii, 26 ff.; *Par.*, xix, 48.

⁶ *Apoc.* xii, 9.

⁷ *Inf.*, xxxiv, 121 ff.

⁸ Dante's own idea. Up to then purgatory was thought to be somewhere near hell, in the middle of the earth or in one of the planets.

Lucifer is suspended in space, equidistant from the four corners of creation, with the upper half of his body hemmed in by ice and the lower half surrounded by rocks. His head and torso are in the northern hemisphere, the rest of his body in the southern hemisphere. So placed, he has Asia on his right, Africa on his left. Jerusalem, where the crime was committed, is on his head and under his feet is purgatory, the place of expiation. Heaven and earth are linked in history, the shape of this world is the outcome of the drama on high and Satan himself is the maker of his own hell.

As with so many of Dante's fables, we are free to deem this fantasy childish or magnificent. It depends on our opinion of its author. We may look on him as an irresponsible image-monger, the first to be taken in by his own myths, or we may see in him a platonic idealist for whom material realities are pictures of those that are spiritual and more truly real: his task being the poetical re-creation of the Cosmos, he constructs its "objective correlative"—that is to say, an analogy of intelligibles. Thus he must use the pattern of the stars, the relationship of numbers and the geographical symmetries as an iconography both for synthesised truths of another and higher order, and for subtle ideological correspondences.

Lucifer's vast material bulk gives an indication of what his spiritual size must have been. The perfection of him who was once the greatest of angels is expressed inside-out by the vacuous hugeness of mere quantity—it is the inverted reflection of it which we see in his present delusive immensity.

As usual, Dante cleverly fills out his fantasy with careful detail and gives us the data for working out Lucifer's dimensions. Three unusually tall men put end to end would not equal in length even the torso of the giant Nimrod, yet the average man's arm is nearer Nimrod's in size than the giant's is to Lucifer's. Those are the data, slightly simplified.¹ To provide material for calculation is one thing, to calculate is another. Dante was wise to leave the working-out to us—and we should be foolish if we accepted his invitation to do so without a pinch of salt. The data of the problem hint vaguely at colossal proportions. Working out the sum and finding the exact measurements would merely be deceptive.

¹ *Inf.*, xxxi, 61 ff. and xxxiv, 30 ff.

In cases like this, details are like imitation pillars, painted in perspective—it is better not to look at them too closely. An approximate calculation, in fact (it was made by Galileo and later by others with slightly varying results), gives Lucifer's height as roughly $1\frac{1}{3}$ miles—puny compared with what the unaided imagination suggests.

Lucifer has three heads of different colours, red, off-yellow and black. He has six wings, two round each head. We need not go into the fanciful interpretations that have been put on the meaning of these heads—they were not the work of Dante, long before whose time Satan was so represented, “in sculpture, paintings on glass and miniatures in manuscripts”.¹ In these images the purpose of the three heads is to make Satan a symmetrical antagonist to the Trinity. Probably Dante meant them the same way. One of the faces, opposed to the Person of the Father, symbolises jealous impotence and is fittingly coloured a liverish yellow. The second, balancing the Person of the Word, symbolises ignorance and stupidity, which have in a manner of speaking become the substance of Satan—this head is black. Finally the third, being the opposite of the Paraclete who is love, must suggest Satan's essential hatred and is therefore red.

All Lucifer's activity is confined to these three heads and their wings. His wings fan up the wind that freezes Cocytus. His jaws munch unceasingly at the three greatest criminals in the world, Brutus and Cassius, traitors to the supreme political authority, and Judas, traitor to God.² The rest of his body is condemned to immobility.

This ugly creature is Lucifer, once the most beautiful of all the angels.

The poets go down the body of Lucifer to get to the centre of the earth and climb up to the surface on the other side. It is an odd picture.³ Virgil takes Dante on his back and slides down

¹ Cf. A. GRAF, *op cit.* In his Dictionary of Architecture, under *Trinity*, Viollet-le-Duc gives the reproduction of a thirteenth-century miniature representing Lucifer as a man with three faces, one full and two side. According to him, “Satan is often so represented in bas-reliefs of the Last Judgment”.

² Here again Dante was not the first to have this idea. In the Church of Sant'Angelo at Formio near Capua, there is an eleventh-century picture of Judas in Lucifer's jaws. In the church of St. Basil at Étampes a thirteenth-century sculpture shows Lucifer chewing up three sinners. (A. GRAF, *op. cit.*, p. 127, who refers us to CARAVITTA, *I codici e l'arti a Monte Cassino*, 1869, i, p. 245 ff.)

³ *Inf.*, xxxiv, 74 ff.

Lucifer's chest, using the hairs as steps. When he reaches the hips, readjustment is needed. Before he reached the centre of the earth he was going down; now, to get away from it, he must climb up. Still carrying his burden, Virgil has to make a half turn on his own feet. He points his head downwards, to have it on top and, having come down Lucifer's torso, proceeds up his legs. The poet on his back is startled—it feels as if he was going back again.

An amusing description, which the author of the *Divine Comedy*, who was making use of ideas as yet little known, undoubtedly thought the reader would find both startling and instructive. I think it is worth pointing out a scientific howler: we are told that when Virgil gets to the centre it is a tremendous effort to change his position—he does so “con fatica e con angoscia”¹ because it is the place where all the weight of the world is concentrated.² The contrary is true. One of Newton's theorems proves that the nearer a thing is to the centre of the earth the less it weighs. Dante, who was small and probably weighed about ten stone on the earth's surface, would at just over a mile from the centre have weighed no more than five ounces, at one yard a hundred-and-twentieth of an ounce and at the centre nothing. This could scarcely have been tiring for Virgil!

Dante's originality does not lie in his portrait of Lucifer's appearance but in his philosophical conception of his personality. It is here that he begins to make innovations, it is in this that the figure he created is unique. Milton, Goethe, Byron, Victor Hugo, Carducci, Vigny, Baudelaire and, nearest to our time, Paul Valéry, imagined the devil as the quintessence of the spirit of evil, a microcosm of hell, an active Satan, intelligent and mischievous, with something of his magnificence still clinging to him—something at times even attractive: a power struggling against a power, ground down but retaining strength enough to keep from yielding. A figure of this mould, who defies God even under torture, is indeed to be found in Dante, but his name is not Lucifer but Capaneo.³ Dante's Lucifer is an exhausted creature whose energy is spent, whose history is over. He is forced to spend eternity as the lowest link in the chain of living things. He who was once among the most vital of created spirits has turned into a kind of dull brute. At no point is he referred to as *thinking*—he has no

¹ *Inf.*, xxxiv, 78.

² *Ibid.*, iii; cf. *Par.*, xxix, 57.

³ *Ibid.*, xiv, 46-61.

inner life, no rebelliousness, no passions. He just goes on munching and munching and automatically opening and shutting his wings. All we perceive in him is infinite misery—an abject misery in which there is nothing touching. This being, whose likeness to God is as nearly rubbed out as it can be, does nothing apart from his mechanical movements but keep silence and weep. His silence is empty like a lonely desert and the tears which, if they streamed from two eyes, might have roused compassion, are only productive of repugnance, since they gush from six eyes at a time, pour down three chins and mix with the blood and froth of three sets of jaws. This is the vanquished of God, more like a machine (a sort of bellows-cum-mincing-machine) than an intelligent being. If he is the King of Hell, “lo imperador del doloroso regno”,¹ he is so only in the sense that he is its most perfect expression, that is, the lowest thing in it.

Lucifer's torments might seem relatively gentle in comparison with those of the other damned souls. This is true in terms of feeling but not to the eyes of thought. Dante purposely sacrifices the impression to the idea. When he thinks of the worst of all criminals, the range of sensible punishment seems to hold no torture parallel to the sin. He denies Satan a spectacular torment which might have appalled the imagination, and chooses a punishment whose unequalled horror is only apparent to the mind: icebergs and rocks, which surround without touching him, darkness and loneliness, immobility, silence—the point of the description is its symbolism of a punishment that is essentially metaphysical. The interpretation is that the enemy of God, while still existing, is thrust as far away from being as he can be, held by force, against his nature, on the confines of nothingness. Pain might draw pity—Lucifer's ontological degradation witnesses far more effectively to his defeat.

Thus conceived, Lucifer is the antithesis, the antipodes of God. At one extreme we see supreme immobility, the fruit of plenitude, of the fact that God is the one Being who lacks nothing and is therefore in search of nothing. At the other extreme is forced immobility, that of a being so to speak exiled from himself, whose destitution is so complete that he even lacks the means of turning back into himself. At one extreme is God, “materially

¹ *Inf.*, xxxiv, 28.

(metaphorically) outside the universe but spiritually (really) at its hub", at the other Lucifer, "materially at the hub of the universe but spiritually (really) outside it".¹ At one extreme God, towards whom in obedience to a sort of spiritual law of gravity all His true lovers are drawn by the weight of their love (the more one loves the nearer one gets to Him—it is like falling upwards). At the other extreme Lucifer, towards whom souls laden with concupiscence are drawn lower and lower.

Dante's Satan has nothing of the Titan about him. He is not even a Nietzschean figure and we must admit—in defiance of the ideas of the romantics, which cannot but involve a reckless tolerance of evil²—that this may be for the best. Stripped of the elements of a potential epic hero, Lucifer is no higher than a *bestial thing* (the two words necessarily go together here). Within the spiritual scheme, he is still alive enough to be repellent and still has just enough being to demonstrate, like an obscene mutilation, the being he lacks. Less striking at first sight, less pitiable, less theatrical than the conceptions of others, Dante's Lucifer is a typical Dantesque character, evolved by reason and full of theological sense.

AUGUSTE VALENSIN, S.J.

¹ GUIDO MONACORDA: see the pages dedicated to Dante in his fine *Poesia e contemporaneità* (Fussi, Florence).

² Lamartine and Lamennais reproach Dante's Lucifer with ugliness, immobility and unintelligence. That comes to the same as accusing an artist of not flattering his model.

THE FIGURE OF SATAN IN MILTON AND BLAKE

It is especially important, in such a context as this, to make clear at the outset what kind of Satan is to be examined, and how the subject is to be approached. For the figure of Satan, in the work of two poets, is on a different plane of reality from the figure of Satan which is being studied by other writers in this symposium, and must be approached in a different and probably unfamiliar way.

It is a safe generalisation to say that we are accustomed both to Satan as a theological concept and to Satan as an historic manifestation. But neither of these approaches is suited to our present purpose. We are not looking for Milton's "ideas about" Satan, or for Blake's "views on" Satan, as a theologian might collect a catena from St. Thomas on the subject. Nor are we seeking to prove the actuality of Satan, as the historian seeks to do: there is no possibility for us of tracing a group of external manifestations—what Satan says and does—down to a hard core of actuality—who Satan is. The figure of Satan in the work of Milton and Blake is, on the one hand, a different figure from the sum of their views about Satan, and, on the other hand, he is not an historic actuality, he has no life outside their work, he is the *suppositum* of their genius. If we admit that these two approaches are not valid when dealing with Satan in literature, we are now at least entitled to inquire, "What is the way in which to approach the figure of Satan in poetry (and in such contrasting poets as Milton and Blake), or is there any way at all?"

We shall come nearer to the correct answer, I think, if we alter the kind of questions which we have been accustomed to ask. Let us try to find out, not *what* the poets think about Satan, nor *what* Satan does and says in the poems, but rather *why* the poets use the symbol of Satan at all.

Symbolism is a word much in use these days, and capable of being much abused, but nevertheless an almost indispensable term for dealing with poets who are not systematic thinkers (and how

many of our English poets are?). Symbols in poetry are, however, more than handy tickets for philosophical and theological left-luggage. They are, to alter the metaphor, the radial lines along which we may proceed from the circumference of the poetry, the poetry as an externally established fact, to the centre, the individual consciousness of the poet. For that reason the question "Why did Milton and Blake write about Satan at all?" takes precedence over the question "What do Milton and Blake say about Satan?" Our interest, therefore, must resolve itself into an investigation of the necessity of the Satan symbol for Milton and Blake. Satan exists for them in their poetry as the extrapolation of a certain intellectual and emotional conflict, a conflict which could not be resolved at the level of rational statement.

This necessity for the Satan symbol originates from opposite poles in Milton and Blake. In Milton, Satan is a necessity for Milton the poet, in Blake he is a necessity for Blake the man. It is the contrast between Satan the Tempter of Milton, and Satan the Accuser (or the Corrupter) of Blake. The best way to validate these generalisations will be, I think, to pursue the symbol separately in each of the two poets, and to leave the implications of the contrast to the reader himself.

One is very lucky if one manages to survive the study of English literature without having to write an essay on the theme: "Satan is the hero of *Paradise Lost*. Discuss." The now generally accepted battleground was first precisely located in Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*:

"Milton's poem contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that system, of which, by a strange and natural antithesis, it has been a chief popular support. Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost*. It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. . . . Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his devil. And this bold neglect of a direct moral purpose is the most decisive proof of the supremacy of Milton's genius."

Ever since then the majority of writers on Milton have felt obliged to explain, or to explain away, the implications of the

figure of Satan in Milton,¹ and we have had every variety of interpretation from Shelley's own bold assertion of the Promethean Satan (and Promethean Milton) to Mr. C. S. Lewis's comforting reassurances that Milton is both safe *and* sound. Mr. Waldock, in a recent book, tries to solve the difficulties of modern Miltonic criticism by claiming that "some of the major difficulties that we now find in *Paradise Lost* are due, quite simply, to Milton's inexperience in the assessment of narrative problems".² That is to say, Mr. Waldock tries to shift the discussion from moral to technical considerations.

But Milton was a moralising poet, and I think we should keep to the moral plane while endeavouring to account for the difficulties of the Satan symbol, and should try to find an explanation a little deeper and more satisfying than Milton's technical "inexperience".

If we read Milton's commentators with honesty and impartiality, we cannot resist the admission that there is as much judicial evidence to justify Shelley as there is to justify Mr. Lewis. Milton seems to be leaving enough clues about to justify whatever interpretation we care to make, and when we try to make our own interpretation we have not so much the feeling that we may have missed the bus, but rather a Kafka-esque doubt that there was ever a right bus to be caught. This ambiguity of the Satan symbol in Milton can be attributed to two causes; the conflict, firstly, between personality and environment, and, secondly, the conflict which arises when the personality of Milton the man, seeking to express itself univocally, is confronted by the equally strong personality of Milton the poet, seeking to impersonalise his work.

The conflict of Milton with his environment has already been remarked on by Professor Willey, when he reviewed the difficulties of writing an "heroic poem in a scientific age". The difficulty lay in representing the Biblical version of the Fall (which as a Christian and a Puritan Milton had no desire to disbelieve) with his faith (shared with the scientific age in which he lived) in the value and necessity of humane, rational knowledge. Satan only withdrew Adam from that prelapsarian "fugitive and cloistered virtue" which Milton was unable to praise. "Milton," says Professor

¹ I leave out of account the more fundamental criticism of Milton made by Dr. Johnson, T. S. Eliot and Dr. F. R. Leavis.

² A. J. A. WALDOCK, *Paradise Lost and its Critics* (Cambridge 1947), p. 65.

Willey, "was a Promethean, a Renaissance humanist in the toils of a myth of quite contrary import, a myth which yearned, as no Milton could, for the blank innocence and effortlessness of a golden age."¹

But beneath the conflict between Milton's belief in the authority of Scripture and the rationalistic climate of his age, there is a conflict between that part of Milton's personality which sought to express itself and that part which sought to subdue, to impersonalise, itself. This conflict, with its resulting appearances of ambiguity, manifests itself, not only in the symbol of Satan, but throughout the whole of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Time and again some character or incident receives a local vitalisation which indicates a flow of sympathy away from Milton's dogmatic intention. The celebrated description of Satan before his first speech is most striking for its irrelevance :

"Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way."

(*P. L.*, i, 619.)

We feel that Milton could not resist putting it in—he is uncertain of our general sympathy, so he makes every effort to secure it locally.

In Book II Milton gives himself the difficult task of trying to make a moral contrast between the counsel of one bad angel and another. To offset Belial's policy of "Ignoble ease and peaceful sloth", Milton makes Mammon the mouthpiece of the orthodox Puritan dislike of Anglican liturgy:

" . . . With what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovereign, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings?"

(*P. L.*, ii, 239.)

¹ B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (Cambridge 1946), p. 255.

Mammon's preference of "Hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile pomp" combines Puritan self-righteousness and Miltonic self-dramatisation.

As *Paradise Lost* proceeds, I think Milton becomes less and less concerned to establish sympathetic contact with his reader, and more and more concerned to be faithful to certain dogmatic statements with which he himself was not in sympathy. We feel at times that he is overstating and over-elaborating a situation with the judicial impartiality of a judge who sums up the evidence for the defence in a case where it is obvious that the prosecution will obtain the verdict. That portrayal of Abdiel's loyalty to the Son of God in Book V is an example of this. There is no space or occasion here to go into the question of Milton's Arianism, but it is noticeable that all Milton's emphasis goes into the character and situation of Abdiel, and not into the strength of Abdiel's arguments. It is his personality which rivets our attention:

"So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless—faithful only he
Among innumerable false; unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept—his love—his zeal:
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And with retorted scorn, his back he turned
On those proud towers to swift destruction doomed."

(*P. L.*, v, 896.)

To ennoble Abdiel, Milton gives him a greater share of the majestic, Satanic "scorn". We are invited to approve of Abdiel rather because he is loyal to what, in the local situation, looks like a lost cause—than because he is right.

The theme of the Fall posits the relationship between Knowledge and Satan, a relationship which Milton as a humanist had an instinctive reluctance to acknowledge. His difficulty in presenting the Tree of Knowledge itself has been sufficiently remarked upon by Miltonic commentators, and most readers will agree that

Milton concentrates his attention, not on the actuality of the Tree, but on Satan's deception and fraud—the Tree is not what Satan says it is, and Satan the Tempter merges into Satan the Deceiver.

The unsatisfactoriness of this dualism manifests itself in local eruptions indicative of an unresolved tension not very far below the surface. For instance, there is the violence of metaphor with which Milton bolsters up Raphael's plea for "knowledge within bounds":

"But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind."

(*P. L.*, vii, 126.)

The unseemly and indecorous vigour of the digestive metaphor enables Milton to have it both ways: Raphael is the mouthpiece of the orthodox view, and yet we are left with the impression that if Raphael has to argue *like that*, there must be something wrong with his case.

A simpler instance of Milton's evasive (or perhaps compensatory) technique on the subject of Satanic knowledge, occurs in *Paradise Regained* where the Son of God replies to Satan's praise of Greek poetry by contrasting it with the Hebrew:

"Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek; the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs,—to all true tastes excelling,—
Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies, and his saints:
Such are from God inspired,—not such from thee,
Unless where moral virtue is expressed
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost."

(*P. R.*, iv, 342.)

The final saving clause typifies Milton's procedure. He gives a full *statement* of a case with which he is not in full sympathy, and

redeems the total effect by the emotive and undefined phrase about the "light of nature".

Another way in which Milton's personality compensates itself for the exigencies of orthodoxy is by a kind of implied "reductio ad absurdum". In Book x of *Paradise Lost* Satan describes his engineering of the Fall of Adam, and of God's subsequent displeasure with Adam:

" . . . Him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator; and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple! He, thereat
Offended (worth your laughter!) hath given up
Both his beloved Man, and all his world,
To Sin and Death a prey . . . "

(*P. L.*, x, 485.)

In fact, Milton cannot help pointing out that if we accept the orthodox account of the Fall, *as Milton himself has, perforce, given it in the poem*, then Satan has had the best laugh, and God is made to look a fool. If in fact the apple of the Tree of Knowledge was a fraud, if the tabooed Tree itself possessed no powers at all, then the Fall of Man was not a sublime tragedy, but a ludicrous farce. That, Milton implies, is the situation we must acknowledge if we believe in the interpretation of the Fall as given, in the interests of orthodoxy, by Milton himself. But, the uncomfortable insinuation persists, if we believe the Fall to be a great tragedy, then Satan must have had some knowledge, some power to offer and to confer, a power of which man remains in possession.

These underlying ambiguities in Milton's presentment of Satan, resulting from the conflict between his personal feeling and the exigencies of his theme, are only heightened by the violence of Satan's subjection. Milton is straining to keep Satan in subjection—he allows Satan the best laugh, but keeps for God the last laugh. To defeat the Satan of his own creation, Milton is prepared to alter his expressed intentions and even the Biblical narrative itself.

Milton's variation of intention may be noted by contrasting the concluding book of *Paradise Lost* with the opening book of *Paradise Regained*. Book xii of *Paradise Lost* represents a coda, as it were, to the theme of the work. The angel Michael foretells to

Adam the future Redemption, and in doing so, seeks to minimise the heroic stature of Satan:

“ . . . ‘Dream not of their fight,
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan whose fall from Heaven (a deadlier bruise)
Disabled not to give thee thy death’s wound:
Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee, and in thy seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want—
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death; and suffering death—
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
So only can high justice rest appaid.’”

(P. L., xii, 387.)

Michael (and Milton) conceive the Redemption in non-heroic terms—not in terms of a duel between well-matched antagonists, nor of the destruction of Satan, but in terms of “obedience to the law of God”. Yet at the commencement of *Paradise Regained* God “the most High” tells Gabriel of Satan’s overthrow by the Son of Man:

“Winning by conquest, what the first man lost,
By fallacy surprised.”

(P. R., i, 154.)

The contrast between Michael’s stress on the Son’s “obedience to the law of God”, and the Most High’s assertion of the Son’s physical power of “conquest”, shows that Milton, confronted with the problem of writing a sequel to *Paradise Lost*, reconciled himself to the familiar heroic pattern of conflict between two formidable opponents. The figure of Satan the Tempter, rather than the Son’s “humiliation and strong sufferance”, was clearly a more congenial theme for Milton. But this time Satan, as the

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Tempter, had to be vanquished completely and finally, and Milton had to resort to a distortion of the Bible story to suit his purpose. The crux occurs at the conclusion of the Fourth Book. What is described by St. Luke as the final temptation of Jesus by Satan, Milton deliberately explains is not a temptation at all, but Satan's final insult:

"Yet with no new device,—they all were spent;—
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repelled."

(*P. R.*, iv, 442.)

Milton's Satan places Jesus on a precarious pinnacle of the Temple. Jesus must either by His own power perform a miracle for Himself by standing upright on the pinnacle, or cast Himself down in the knowledge that He will be saved by the miraculous power of God the Father:

"There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill: I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed;—highest is best:
Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down; safely, if Son of God:
For it is written, "He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels: in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone."
To whom thus Jesus: 'Also it is written,
"Tempt not the Lord thy God."' He said, and stood:
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell."

(*P. R.*, iv, 551.)

Milton makes Christ's assertion of His own miraculous power immediately precede the absolute and final overthrow of Satan. By altering the Bible narrative, Milton establishes the orthodoxy of his theme, and forcibly readjusts the balance of retributive justice. We are so surprised at the suddenness of Satan's overthrow (and also so willing to accept it) that we do not pause to try to calculate exactly where our emotional sympathies have been

led—and that, it has been my purpose to suggest, was exactly what Milton intended should happen. The ambiguities in his handling of the Satan symbol show that Milton was trying to enrich his poem from two opposing sources—the fiery emotional grandeur of Romantic rebellion, and the massive nobility of Puritan righteousness.

In Milton our chief interest has been to follow how he tries to keep the figure of Satan under control—what happens to the Satan symbol. But in Blake our preoccupation will be to examine his construction of the symbol—how Satan comes into being at all.

To say that Blake was an artistic and poetic genius is to do more than repeat a commonplace of the literary manuals. He was gifted to a remarkable degree with the power of intuitive perception, the power of giving the quality of inevitability to his union of natural objects with his own experience. The “wirey, bounding line” is as much a part of his poetic as of his artistic technique: his major poetry conveys a sense of unanalysable concreteness—we feel a reluctance to try to distinguish between Blake’s experience, his poetic experience, and his expression. A poem like the “Sunflower”, for instance, does not lead us naturally to look behind it, or beyond it: we are only left to contemplate it as it is. Now Blake’s elaboration of the figure of Satan is, I think, a part of his attempt to erect a total philosophy of life out of his own intuitive genius. He is not prepared to accept his remarkable poetic intuition as a personal gift, he wants to make poetic intuition the very key to human existence. And within the symbol of Satan he seeks to include everything which militates against poetic intuition.

We all know Blake’s remark on Bacon’s *Essays*, “Good advice for Satan’s kingdom”, but perhaps we are not so familiar with a later remark on the *Essays*, “Did not Jesus descend and become a servant? The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman and not a man: he is a Lord Chancellor.” We all know the line about “dark Satanic mills”, but perhaps we are not so familiar with the line from *Jerusalem*: “My Selfhood! Satan! arm’d in gold.” It is the area bounded by those four points that we must try to investigate a little in this present study.

Blake perceived the inadequacy of eighteenth-century deism, and its perversion of Christianity:

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"Man must and will have Some Religion: if he has not the Religion of Jesus, he will have the Religion of Satan, and will erect the Synagogue of Satan, calling the Prince of this World, God, and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the Name of God. Will any one say, 'Where are those who worship Satan under the Name of God?' Where are they? Listen! Every Religion that Preaches Vengeance for Sin is the Religion of the Enemy and Avenger and not of the Forgiver of Sin, and their God is Satan, Named by the Divine Name. Your Religion, O Deists! Deism, is the Worship of the God of this World by the means of what you call Natural Religion and Natural Philosophy, and of Natural Morality or Self-Righteousness, the Selfish Virtues of the Natural Heart. This was the Religion of the Pharisees who murder'd Jesus. Deism is the same and ends in the same."
*(Jerusalem, 52.)*¹

Blake disregarded the claims of Christ that He had come, not to destroy but to fulfil. To Blake, the exaltation of the moral law by eighteenth-century Anglicanism was not only a sign of insufficiency, it was a corruption of Christ's very purpose, something positively diabolic:

"I was standing by when Jesus died;
 What I call'd Humility, they call'd Pride . . .
 He did not die with Christian Ease,
 Asking pardon of his Enemies:
 If he had, Caiaphas would forgive;
 Sneaking submission can always live.
 He had only to say that God was the devil,
 And the devil was God, like a Christian Civil:
 Mild Christian regrets to the devil confess
 For affronting him thrice in the Wilderness;
 He had soon been bloody Caesar's Elf,
 And at last he would have been Caesar himself.
 Like Dr. Priestly & Bacon & Newton—
 Poor Spiritual Knowledge is not worth a button!
 For thus the Gospel Sir Isaac confutes:
 'God can only be known by his Attributes . . .'"

(The Everlasting Gospel, d.)

¹ All references to Blake are from *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. G. Keynes (Nonesuch Press, 1946).

Besides labelling as Satanic anything which militated against his own version of the "Everlasting Gospel", Blake associated with Satan the whole development of industrial manufacture:

"And all the Arts of Life they are chang'd into the Arts of Death in Albion.

The hour-glass contemn'd because its simple workmanship
Was like the workmanship of the plowman, & the water wheel
That raises water into cisterns, broken & burn'd with fire
Because its workmanship was like the workmanship of the shepherd;

And in their stead, intricate wheels invented, wheel without wheel,
To perplex youth in their outgoings & to bind to labours in Albion

Of day & night the myriads of eternity: that they may grind
And polish brass & iron hour after hour, laborious task,
Kept ignorant of its use: that they might spend the days of wisdom

In sorrowful drudgery to obtain a scanty pittance of bread,
In ignorance to view a small portion & think that All,
And call it Demonstration, blind to all the simple rules of life."

(*Jerusalem*, 65.)

The "Satanic mills" are thus linked back to the seminal philosophers of the eighteenth century, the rationalists, exponents of "Demonstration, blind to all the simple rules of life".

The Arts of Life were for Blake the supreme reality, and because they were the supreme reality, therefore Satan must be their enemy:

"I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination, Imagination, the real & eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow, & in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more . . . What is the Joy of Heaven but Improvement in the things of the Spirit? What are the Pains of Hell but Ignorance, Bodily Lust, Idleness & devastation of the things of the Spirit?"

(*Jerusalem*, 77.)

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Blake's approach to the figure of Satan seems to me to operate from this point of view. Satan is used by Blake to validate his own faith in his artistic genius; every obstruction to Art and to intuitive Genius is Satanic. In a letter to Hayley of 11th December 1805 we find Blake preaching an aesthetic gospel in the tones of a Nonconformist minister:

"O what wonders are the Children of Men! Would to God that they would consider it,—that they would consider their Spiritual Life, regardless of that faint Shadow called Natural Life, and that they would Promote Each other's Spiritual labours, each according to its Rank, & that they would know that Receiving a Prophet is a Duty which If omitted is more Severely Avenged than Every Sin and Wickèdness beside. It is the Greatest of Crimes to Depress True Art and Science. I know that those who are dead from the Earth, & who mocked and Despised the Meekness of True Art (and such, I find, have been the situation of our Beautiful, Affectionate Ballads),¹ I know that such Mockers are Most Severely Punished in Eternity. I know it, for I see it & dare not help. The Mockers of Art is the Mockers of Jesus. Let us go on, Dear Sir, following his Cross: let us take it up daily, Persisting in Spiritual Labours & the Use of that Talent which it is Death to Bury, and of that Spirit to which we are called."²

Neglect and opposition had reduced Blake to the task of trying to cheer himself up, and of claiming a religious sanction for the exercise of his talents in the face of a hostile environment.

No one can be unaware of Blake's untuitive grasp of reality: Blake seeks to stress the reality of his poetic apprehension by deepening more and more the gulf below it, so that we are reminded of Hopkins's lines:

"O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed . . ."

Blake's "wirey bounding line" is the edge of that cliff, the border between the poetic reality and the Satanic abyss:

¹ HAYLEY's *Ballads*, illustrated by Blake; cf. GILCHRIST, *Life of Blake* (Everyman ed.), pp. 193-8.

² *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Keynes, p. 910.

"The Vegetative Universe opens like a flower from the Earth's
 centre
 In which is Eternity. It expands in Stars to the Mundane
 Shell
 And there it meets Eternity again, both within and without,
 And the abstract Voids between the Stars are the Satanic
 Wheels . . .
 (But whatever is visible to the Generated Man
 Is a Creation of mercy & love from the Satanic Void) . . ."
 (*Jerusalem*, 13.)

Blake claims that reality (which he knows the rationalists would
 call "phantasy") has to be supported by a Satanic abyss, and
 the more he insists on the reality of Art, the more he insists on
 that Satanic abyss. In *Jerusalem* the "hard cold constrictive
 Spectre", Arthur, represents both Rationalism and Satanism:

"But the Spectre, like a hoar frost & a Mildew, rose over Albion,
 Saying, 'I am God, O Sons of Men! I am your Rational Power!
 Am I not Bacon & Newton & Locke who teach Humility to
 Man,
 Who teach Doubt & Experiment? & my two Wings, Voltaire,
 Rousseau?
 Where is that Friend of Sinners? that Rebel against my Laws
 Who teaches Belief to the Nations & an unknown Eternal Life?
 Come hither into the Desert & turn these stones to bread.
 Vain foolish Man! wilt thou believe without Experiment
 And build a World of Phantasy upon my Great Abyss,
 A World of Shapes in craving lust & devouring appetite'."
 (*Jerusalem*, 54.)

His intolerance of the unartistic element in humanity, his
 desire to maintain the equation Human Life=Spiritual Life=
 Art, drives Blake into a kind of manicheism. For Blake the very
 limitations of the human personality are Satanic:

"There is a limit of Opakeness and a limit of Contraction
 In every Individual Man, and the limit of Opakeness
 Is named Satan, and the limit of Contraction is named
 Adam . . .

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But there is no Limit of Expansion; there is no Limit of Translucence

In the bosom of Man for ever from eternity to eternity . . .

Thy Selfhood is for ever accursed from the Divine presence."

(*Jerusalem*, 42.)¹

"Selfhood" (the Satanic and Adamic qualities) is an element to be got rid of. Blake refuses to accept human limitations: he will only transcend them:

"Inspiration & Vision was then, & now is, & I hope will always Remain, my Element, my Eternal Dwelling place . . ."
(*Marginalia*, Reynolds, *Discourse*, viii.)

The conflict between his personality and his environment made it almost impossible for Blake to persist in his work without the consolations of religious belief. Into the symbol of Satan he poured his hatred of every impediment of artistic genius—from rationalism to industrialism, critical conservatism, and even to the natural limitations of fallen and redeemed humanity. The symbol of Satan in Blake represents his refusal to accept his own genius as a natural gift, and his attempt to make it a sufficient object of supernatural religious belief.²

We have tried to trace above some contrasting features of the figure of Satan in two English poets. The methods of the approach, and the form of the conclusions, may be unfamiliar to some of those readers whose interest in the subject of this symposium is not primarily literary. My aim, however, has been to present considerations which I hope may be of interest to non-literary specialists, while at the same time remaining relevant to Milton and Blake from a literary standpoint.

T. A. BIRRELL

¹ The whole speech of Los in this section merits full quotation.

² The Satan symbol, together with his quasi-religious views, was a gradual development in Blake, but owing to pressure of space I have had to represent it as a *fait accompli*. The *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is a most important document in this development; Blake seems to be moving towards the religious formulations described above, and at the same time to be satirising his own attempts with a certain self-conscious cynicism.

BALZAC AND THE "END OF SATAN"

IT WOULD be surprising if Balzac had never evoked the figure of Satan. There was every reason for him to tackle it; his reading of occult writings; his susceptibility to literary fashions, which made him take up, and really get to the bottom of, all the themes of his time—most of all, however, the nature of his more intimate personal anxieties. It was not for nothing, nor without some inner compulsion, that throughout his entire works he built up—more even than a psychology or a sociology—a complete mythology of man. The Balzacian character is not shut in within himself, nor even reduced to his social co-ordinates; on every side he is open to influences, to calls, to supernatural forces, or at least to forces which tend to become supernatural as a result of a curious imaginative rhetoric. These forces, when named, are given the capital letter which turns them into active persons, protagonists in a struggle waged over each soul, over every destiny. They are called Money, Power, Passion; they are paired off as opponents—Matter and Spirit, Energy and Exhaustion, Hell and Paradise. They are the promise of Felicity or the threat of Sorrow around the living being; they form the immense confederacy of Destiny, and through them our brief existence opens out into the limitless distance of mysterious origins, of ancestral transmissions, of projections into the future towards generations to come.

And yet neither God nor Satan is explicitly invoked in the Balzacian universe, and the polarity does not seem to be that of good and evil. We may guess at the conflicts between the spirits of energy and sluggishness; at the strong downward pull which opposes itself to the flights of the spirit. But these contrary tendencies receive no moral qualification, and the spiritual combat seems to be waged in the opaque dullness of the flesh; the desire which seeks temporal satisfaction in a thousand shapes through the heavy earthly dough is the same desire which calls us to the immaterial joys of knowing. Thirsting after the absolute, Balzac

had come to believe—and in this he was influenced to some extent by the occultists—that all life, whether spiritual or corporeal, sprang from one sole Energy, but was maintained by teeming antagonisms, by conflicts which generated its motion. Not only do the maxims of *Louis Lambert* assert the continuity and equal nature of the vital urge and of spiritual effort; the love episodes in Balzac's work would all have us believe that the exaltation of the senses, without the intrusion of any other element, leads to a transfiguration and brings carnal man to the threshold of angelic purity. Does not Louis Lambert go so far as to reverse the sense of the "Et Verbum caro factum est" and declare that the gospel of the future will teach: "And flesh shall be made the Word, it shall become the Word of God"? In the same way, do we not read in *Séraphita* that "the earth is heaven's nursery-garden"? And does not Madame de Mortsauf declare in *Le Lys dans la Vallée* that we must "pass through a red melting-pot [red is terrestrial, carnal passion] before we can arrive, saintly and perfect, in the higher spheres"?

Yet this Balzacian angelism, which found its most complete expression in the character of *Séraphita*—an angel born of the perfect love of two fleshly creatures—came up against certain limitations which had to be recognised. The epilogue of *Séraphita* is the realisation of an inevitable failure; the transformation of terrestrial man into a creature of light is impossible, or at least reserved to the rare elect. Humanity is seen once more to be fettered by time, confined within the limits of imperfection. With the consciousness of suffering—which Balzac has the courage not to turn away from when he is brought up against it in his work—he rediscovers tragedy. And this tragedy naturally finds expression as a grief connected with the concepts familiar to him: he is obsessed by the thought which forms the theme of *Peau de chagrin*—the thought of the inevitable using up of energy, of life consuming itself. The common norm demands that man, who is subject to the law of devouring time, should exhaust his strength in proportion as he uses it in the attempt to vanquish time. And this norm is valid for the spiritual man thirsting for truth—the man personified by Balthazar Claës in *La Recherche de l'Absolu*, or the painter Frenhofer in the *Chef d'oeuvre inconnu*—just as much as for the ambitious man seeking power or wealth—Rubempré, Rastignac, Grandet, Nucingen.

One might ask oneself where Satan will find a crevice to slip through into this Balzacian universe—a universe from which the dualism of good and evil has been so successfully kept out that the greatest criminal, as long as he has imagination, appears as a wholly admirable being, quite on a level with the most distinguished minds.

In a world such as the world of the Romantics, which had stepped outside the framework of Christianity, the devil assumes a thousand different aspects, according to the preferences and idiosyncracies of each individual. The poets of the period all dreamt more or less of a reconciled universe, a restored cosmic harmony, and thus of an "end of Satan"; each imagined it in his own way and according to the law of his own vision of things. Towards 1830 the tinsel devil, which as a literary and theatrical figure had sent agreeable shivers down the spine throughout the eighteenth century, no longer interested anyone. The not very wicked devil whom first Le Sage and then Cazotte had put into circulation—a devil at best capable of helping out the plot of a novel or deceiving the credulous—was relegated to the lumber-room. Byron now tried his hand at Satan; Hoffmann mixed his devil's brew; Goethe's Mephistopheles had his faithful, who failed to see how much of the purely literary and the faked there was in him. Lucifer won back his old prestige, and once again his sinister designs appeared perfectly credible. The declamatory writers of the time liked to pose as little Satans, and put on airs which they imagined to be the defiant gestures of great rebels. They admired the stubborn negation of the angel in exile, or else, out of sympathy with the sufferings of this exile, they became his champions, pleaded his cause, and dreamed of the hour when God should forgive him—the hour which was to usher in a golden age after the long centuries of darkness. The Romantic period was essentially inconsistent, torn between pose and sincerity, wearing a mask, yet believing itself to be entirely open: it was an age which loved misfortune, extolled the victims of fate, and was a little inclined to confuse Lord Byron with Satan; but at the same time it tried to persuade itself that evil and suffering would one day be overcome. Satan, in this unreal literature which was nevertheless full of a very real anguish, became a symbolic figure, filled with the splendour of evil: but none the less he was to be one day reintegrated into shadowless light.

De Vigny played for some time with the idea of writing a *Satan Pardonné*, which much later was indeed to be written, but by Victor Hugo. The fallen angel of *La Fin de Satan* bears a family likeness to the poet who invented him; he carries on him the fatal marks of genius—loneliness, wounded pride, the despairing cry to an unresponsive heaven. The strife between God and Satan, which continues throughout the centuries, and will continue as long as the human history of which it is the true secret, here assumes the forms which are natural to Hugo's imagination. The entire myth of this prophetic epic is built up on the symbolism of light and shadow. Lucifer has descended into the kingdom of night—that is, into the absence of being, since being is light. Evil is only privation; it has no more than a negative existence. It is not Satan himself who is total night, the source of evil; born as he was in heaven, he still retains a luminous nature, even after his fall. It is his nocturnal daughter Lilith who is absolute evil, and she lives by his side in the chasm of a lifeless life. Forgiveness and the reintegration of Satan become possible in this way: his other daughter, Isis or Liberty, formed at the moment of his fall by a feather of his wing, has only to descend into the dark abyss and, being Light, she will disperse the shadows. Lilith will not even die at her approach: she will reveal herself as what she is—pure nullity. Then Satan, finding Liberty once more, in his daughter, will see the fulfilment of his long-felt desire—the desire for the forgiveness of God.

Hugo's myth satisfied its author and seemed to him a valid solution of the problem of evil, because this problem was set in the particular coherence of his world of imagery. The Balzacian myth of the End of Satan is no less related to the physics and metaphysics of the *Comédie humaine*. In the tale called *Melmoth Réconcilié*, written in 1835, Balzac retained almost nothing of the character he borrowed from Maturin's novel. He did not merely transfer the adventure to the Parisian setting of his novels; he also imagined the annihilation of evil in accordance with his own belief in vital energy and its irremediable exhaustion.

The plot unfolds in the Paris of the restored monarchy, and in the world of the Stock Exchange. The offices of the Nucingen bank, the Gymnase Theatre, a courtesan's flat—these form the scene of the last years of Satan's life. The strangeness of the events

is all the more disturbing because they take place in an everyday setting, among such characters as an English aristocrat—more English than the English—a debauched bank clerk, formerly an officer of the Grande Armée, a young woman with a dubious reputation and a warm heart and one or two shady characters from the financial *demi-monde*. In this modern society, which has abjured the ethics of honour, everything is subjugated to the evil rule of money, and the devil has no difficulty in finding his instrument of perversion.

In his quest of souls for sale, Satan has fixed his choice upon the Englishman, Melmoth. He has given him supernatural powers, and turned this icy, rigid, black-clad figure, with his expressionless face and dagger-like eyes, into a patented instigator of evil upon earth. His powers are not indeterminate, but selected according to Balzacian optics: John Melmoth has the faculty of infallible action and; more fearful still, the gift of absolute knowledge. This choice of the benefits conferred by a pact with Satan reveals—without the author's knowledge, perhaps—certain of his anxieties which are often to be seen in his works. Thanks to the gold which is one of the material aspects of evil, Gobseck, the usurer, also enjoys a kind of possession which he imposes on others, and a diabolical clairvoyance which enables him to read souls and to force out their secrets. Is not this knowledge closely related to the "second sight" which Balzac attributed to the novelist, and which he always feared might lead to madness? The alchemist in the *Recherche de l'Absolu*, the artists of *Gambara*, *Massimilla Doni*, the *Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*, are all victims of the same passion to know, which places them on the brink of universal knowledge. Ultimately, however, this passion is seen to be a curse, which destroys life, ruins the individual, and brings tragedy in its train.

Melmoth cannot fail to be aware of this cruel ambivalence of his power, and Satan has foreseen that he will not be able to bear its crushing weight for long. So he has granted him in addition the licence to re-sell his privilege to anyone who will take it in exchange for his eternal salvation. The seduced man has thus become like his seducer. When he tires of his demonic role, he will be able to find a successor without any difficulty, for with his power to read souls, he can always discover someone who is ready to succumb.

Except for the period scenery, everything in the account is so far traditional, and although Balzac significantly insists on the gift of demoniacal knowledge, he has drawn his inspiration from the many conventional stories of satanic pacts in popular literature, which was a happy hunting-ground for the Romantics where this theme was concerned. It is only later that the really Balzacian elements of the tale become apparent in the description of the powers of Satan and of their major deficiency; in the methods used by grace to save Melmoth's first successor; finally, and especially, in the end of the story itself, which turns on the curious idea that time wears away evil and causes its gradual devaluation.

Melmoth, then, catches the cashier Castanier red-handed, at the very moment when he is committing a forgery in order to be able to run off with the beautiful Aquilina; and he forces him to accept the pact. The pages in which Balzac describes the cashier's interior experiences and his sudden superhuman lucidity, are written in that exalted yet precise style which, in the *Comédie Humaine*, always marks the intoxication of discovery and the rapture of intelligence. When Balzac is carried away in this manner, we may be sure that he is touching upon a subject near to his own intimate preferences or his secret fears. The state of sovereign knowledge in which Castanier suddenly finds himself, with his thought encompassing the world "from a prodigious height", is like a hypostatic evocation of the dangerous privileges granted to men of genius, to great artists, to Balzac himself. Castanier has received from Satan the ability to satisfy all his desires, but the real gift, the gift which counts, is the omniscience which places him beyond time and space. "Eritis sicut dei."

It is possible that Balzac, in thinking out these moments of accursed ecstasy, had at the back of his mind some memory of *Faust*, which Nerval had translated a few years earlier. But there is in this episode an unmistakable personal note, which becomes even more striking later, when Castanier discovers—as he does very soon—the bitterness of the deception practised on him. Gifted though he is with the unlimited power which Balzac had always dreamed of possessing, and which Louis Lambert thought he could acquire by method, the poor fellow soon comes to see that he has been duped. He has enjoyment and knowledge, but in exchange for them he has renounced love and prayer. "It was a terrible condition. . . . He felt within himself something vast

which earth could never satisfy." His worst suffering is to have an intelligence which has assimilated everything, together with a desire which nothing can ever slake. Knowing all that is knowable, he "pants after the unknown"; and Balzac, returning to his ever significant image of the angel, writes: "He spent the whole day spreading his wings, longing to traverse the shining spheres of which he had a clear and despairing intuition."

"A clear and despairing intuition" of the universal mystery—such is the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge once it is possessed. Castanier discovers that he has cut off himself from other human beings and has bidden "a lamentable farewell to his human condition", without ceasing to be a temporal creature. He sinks into "that fearful melancholy of supreme power which Satan and God can remedy only by an activity known to no other". His misfortune is to be all-powerful without finding any object that appears worthy of the application of this power, and without any divine or demoniacal discernment to show him its possible use. For, in the Balzacian world, there is no other satisfaction than by the deed. Castanier cannot acquire the creative force of God, but neither can he feel the hatred which gives Satan the joys of destruction; these joys exist only for a being who knows them to be eternal, whereas Castanier "feels himself a devil, but a devil to come"—an unaccomplished devil. He is a creature in between—neither angel nor beast, but man—bored with all that he can possess, and more than ever tormented by the desire for something beyond his possession.

This analysis is only fully valid when it is referred to the central themes of Balzac's thought—the obsession with ambivalent knowledge, the myth of creativeness and action, the passionate longing for the infinite, as piercing as that of Baudelaire, and secretly accompanied by the anguished memory of an irremediable lack, for ever inherent in the human condition.

But the hope of salvation will yet find expression through a truly Balzacian device. It is the insatiability of Castanier's Faustian character which opens the crack in his hell through which grace can infiltrate. All earthly things seem to him petty and ludicrous, and with the desire of evanescent immensity planted within him, he can think only of what escapes his grasp. He has renounced the eternity of the blessed, and for this very reason he can think of nothing else. "He could think only of heaven," says

Balzac, rather as if the accursed desire for power had, in tricking him, hollowed out within him a space which only the presence of God could fill.

Driven half-mad by his sufferings, Castanier rushes to Melmoth, only to find that his predecessor in damnation has made an edifying end the day before, and to assist at his funeral at Saint Sulpice. Then music intervenes, as it so often does in Balzac—especially liturgical music. In the very hour of his sin, Castanier has already heard for a brief moment the angelic harmony of Heaven, but he has stubbornly refused to listen. Now, however, the strains of the *Dies Irae* quite overwhelm him. His very simplicity and ignorance make him all the more profoundly affected by the music, and help him to open his heart to the message of grace. Instinct, even more than intelligence, clears the way for the reception of this message, and Castanier, enlightened by a real revelation and once more conscious of his human insignificance, accepts the truth. Balzac comments somewhat strangely on this sudden conversion. The cashier, he says, had "soaked himself in the infiniteness of evil" and from it had retained the thirst for the infiniteness of good. "His infernal power had revealed the divine power to him."

The comment is brief, but we may well believe that Balzac's unexpressed meditations carried his mind much further, forecasting the profound intuitions of Bloy, the paradoxical experiences of Dostoevski's heroes, and the very substance of the work of Bernanos. What Castanier has just seen in a flash is that hell—to quote the astonishing saying of Barbey d'Aurevilly—"hell is heaven hollowed out".

It is not yet the end of Satan. The man who has been his instrument is saved, but he still has to get rid of the accursed burden by laying it on someone else. The dénouement of *Melmoth réconcilié* is hasty, obviously scamped, yet brought about with a *coup de théâtre* which is not wholly gratuitous. Castanier sells his powers to a ruined financier, who keeps them only for a moment and makes them over at a loss, like falling shares. The evil one's gift keeps changing hands for a lower and lower price, until that evening it falls first to a house-painter who hardly knows its value, and then to an amorous clerk. This last owner uses up its remaining force in an orgy which kills him before he can find a new buyer.

Thus evil is devalued like a currency, rubbed and worn away by use like an old coin, weakened as if by a gradual loss of energy. There is comedy in this epilogue which shows as something ludicrous the absolute power of Satan, exhausted, limp and done for as it now is. What was once sovereign knowledge has deteriorated into the commonplace instrument of sensuality. Omniscience becomes no more than a kind of aphrodisiac, and its last users are unaware of its origin.

No doubt this extremely original version of the end of Satan, dying of auto-consumption, has its own problems. If one tried to make it too coherent, one would run up against a blank wall of logical difficulties. Balzac, however, was not the man to let this trouble him: he was always fascinated by the creation of a mythology, which set in motion his inventive brain and gave him the feeling that he was penetrating the dark heart of the mystery which tormented him. But this energy which maintained his enthusiasm was also subject to the laws of wear and tear. The transport, the ecstasy of the first inspiration, so palpable beneath the irony of the tale of Melmoth, exhausts itself towards the end. Balzac gets out of it with a pirouette; he ends the tale with a few dubious puns and with the grotesque intervention of a German scholar, a disciple of Jakob Boehme, a first-rate demonologist, whom facetious clerks turn to ridicule. One may find this epilogue in bad taste, or, if one is more familiar with the personal anxieties which tormented Balzac, one may prefer to believe that this final burst of laughter drowns a cry of terror. Balzac is the man who spoke these revealing words: "Death is certain, let us forget it." The problem of evil and the problem of the limitations of knowledge tortured him no less than the awareness of death. By fixing his mind on them too intently he was afraid, as was Louis Lambert, of passing beyond the frontier which separates reasonable vision from insane hallucination. If he laughs, his laughter has a very troubled, a very disquieting ring.

Satan does not again make a personal appearance in Balzac's work, but he assigns emissaries who all, more or less unmistakably, carry his credentials. Their master is Vautrin, who comes very near to being created in the image and likeness of the dark angel. Here we are no longer in the region of the fantastic tale, but in that social reality of which Balzac is always regarded as having been the close observer, careful to reproduce it "as it really is".

Vautrin, at the centre of this world of *Illusions perdues* and *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes*, is no more, perhaps, than a bandit and a police spy, who uses obscure but entirely human methods to obtain the pleasures conferred by occult powers. He launches a reign of terror, for he holds in his hand the threads of a thousand very real intrigues, by means of which he practises blackmail, backs his threats and disperses his enemies. He terrifies and he also seduces, holding some through fear and others through the inexplicable spell he casts over them. He is not unnaturally mixed up in the affairs of Gobseck, the usurer whose gold is the instrument of power and knowledge, as it is also for Satan and for the seekers of the philosopher's stone. Vautrin changes his name, his face and his appearance, and in his new "incarnation" he sets himself to seduce those who had distrusted him in his previous avatar. He is the impostor who takes in everybody and who is known as "Cheat-Death", but we are never quite sure whether or not he is deceiving his favourites to guide them towards happiness—towards what he believes is happiness, but is in fact the sensuality of power carried to its extreme limits. When confronted with any other form of life, any other desire, any passion different from his own, he emits the horrifying laughter of Mephistopheles witnessing Faust's love for Margaret.

This demiurge, who in many ways is one of the mythical presentations of Balzac himself within his work, is constantly spoken of in terms applicable to Satan. His passion for Lucien de Rubempré is a desire of possession—an irresistible desire to break into a living soul, to determine its fate, and to make of it a second self. It is far more than a case of commonplace homosexuality. As Thibaudet points out, the *Comédie humaine* could be called the Imitation of God the Father, and the paternity myth is central to it, from the tragic fatherhood of Goriot to the monstrous fatherhood of Vautrin—with Balzac himself always in the background, exalted by his paternal fertility, the father of his characters, and giving to each one of them a carnal, imaginative or spiritual fertility as his chief resemblance to his progenitor.

But throughout the work, is it not rather a question of the imitation of Satan than the imitation of God the Father? Balzac, indeed, does not intend it to be so, and if he has considerable feeling for the great rebels of his romanesque universe, he does not go so far as to extend this feeling to the Angel of Revolt. It is

hard to imagine him writing Baudelaire's *Litanies de Satan*. On the other hand we can easily imagine him questioning himself on his enterprise and perceiving its evil nature. Remaking God's world, re-creating a humanity to rival His, giving life to those children of the imagination which are his fictional characters—is not this to imitate the Creator in His work—not in the mystical and devotional sense, but in that dangerous way in which He is imitated by Satan, “the ape of God”? If terror pursued Balzac into the nights which he spent “tearing the words out of silence”, may we not believe that it was the terror of him who kindled the fire beneath the cauldron of the sorcerer's apprentice and mixed the ingredients of which the Faustian *homunculus* was to be composed? One is reminded of the anguish of Achim d'Arnim, who spent his days “in the solitude of poetry”, clinging to the history of the *golem*—a creature which turned against the man who had been rash enough to give it life.

There is no “end of Satan” here; there is nothing more than the defeat of Vautrin-Balzac. The exhaustion of energy remains the irrevocable law, but it is the novelist who exhausts his strength and dies of having thrown the whole of his life's substance into his work, ruined by the ambition of absolute knowledge.

ALBERT BÉGUIN

THE TURNING-POINT OF ROMANTICISM (1850-70)

ROMANTICISM could be briefly defined as one of those moments recurring in history when the human spirit ceases to consider itself as the centre of interest for literature and art, and takes as their object the totality of creation. It was to return later, enriched by new experiences, to its first position; but for some fifty, some eighty years, it was engaged in cosmic rediscoveries. The universe, which until then had been conceived as a microcosm, once again became provisionally a macrocosm. The temptation to superficial optimism, which constantly besets humanity, then took on a metaphysical form: the material world was thought to possess within itself a redemptive power and a divine innocence, which men had forgotten, but which were perceived and proclaimed by certain elect beings initiated into its mystery—the geniuses—the poets. Claude de Saint-Martin, Victor Hugo and Gérard de Nerval were all writing at the opening of the nineteenth century, and their message gradually permeated the public at large and brought together the “disiecta membra” of the universal soul, restoring to it its primary dignity; resuscitating God. Political and social optimism, found throughout the century’s thought in the shape of faith in the divinity of history, apparently had its origins in the idealistic logic of the age of light as much as in the theosophic speculations of the enlightened, and in a certain lassitude with regard to Voltairian rationalism. The conviction which dominated the minds of the period, from Sénancour to Lamartine, and including the young Montalambert and Lamennais, is that human history, in the totality of its temporal realisations, cannot be a failure. The absolute is practical. Man advances, and the “progress” of his advance infallibly reconstitutes the God who is prevented only by the creature’s imperfection from manifesting Himself—or perhaps even from existing. For it is here that the internal logic of this philosophic movement causes most thinkers to turn away from Christianity. It is well-

known that almost all the Romantics, who started off as Catholics, little by little abandoned the Church—unless indeed they abjured their Romanticism—and joined up with the theosophical tradition. We have only to remember Nerval, Balzac, Lamartine, Michelet—and, again, Hugo.

To their generation, in the years which followed 1830 or 1848, when the moribund old world appeared to be on the verge of receiving fresh life from a hopeful political experiment, the hereafter suddenly came to be seen as a horizon infinitely remote, indeed, but no longer transcendent, and whose very distance seemed to measure the possibility of complete happiness. In spite of the long series of works which already lay behind him, it was only then that Victor Hugo's genius attained its maturity, and enriched as he was, though unconsciously, by the thought of his elders, he gave it the most perfect expression it had yet received. In the interior crisis which marked the beginning of his exile, he set himself to solve the problem of humanity. Saint-Simon, Fourier, the Cabal, all provided food for his meditation. God walks by the side of man, and if man attempts to turn backwards in the path of history, he abandons Being itself. God is light. But light, on the plane of progress, is the manifestation of the spirit. Progress, for man, is revealed as a duty—the duty of releasing more and more of the latent spirituality in the universe. For the poets the duty is still more serious, for it is their task to strip the people's soul and body to the rays of the divine Sun. Hugo conceived a plan for an immense epic poem in which he would again take up all his own previous thought and that of his century and show its deeper significance: the assertion of the immanence of spirit and of good, and the objective non-existence of matter, which is the cause of evil. For months he worked on his project, which he entitled *Conseils à Dieu*: he dreamed of nothing less than proclaiming the inanity of universal evil, the reintegration of beings into their source of light—proclaiming it with such persuasive force that by the magic of the word the miracle would take place and the man-God would at last live in his completeness. Then suddenly, the idea became crystallised, the plan of the poem was drawn up, and the title was fixed as *La fin de Satan*. The Manichaeism which had always been latent in Hugo's work now found its solution: evil does not exist, evil is at most a transitory hypothesis, and when we come to know the nature of things better, evil will disappear. Hugo, whose

thought was chiefly directed towards social problems, felt intensely the existence of a corrupting power somewhere in the depths of the world. To this he traced back, through the chain of cause and effect, the multiplicity of evil acts which spread their "shadow" over history. From social evil he passed by the simple mechanism of his imagery to metaphysical. Evil is unique—in its cause and in its essence, which is nothingness, a mere absence of light. And it is this nothingness, this void, which Hugo (since the poem must express it by a myth) calls Satan. It is a provisional hypothesis, which is necessary to explain the imperfection of human society for a few millenniums. The objective non-existence of Satan is revealed to the thinker from the day when Liberty appears on earth and abolishes or virtually abolishes this imperfection by means of the Revolution of '89.

The poem shows by the interlinking of various symbols how the shadow of Satan lies across history, stretching from Nimrod to Louis XVI (!). It ends with a vision of the storming of the Bastille, and God speaks for the first time in the face of humanity:

"Satan is no more; be born again, O celestial Lucifer!"¹

In spite of the foregoing it would be wrong to say that the Satan of Hugo's apocalypses is an abstraction or a mere metaphor. At the heart of the poetic universe he truly exists; the reader can certainly call to mind a number of passages testifying to the state of quasi-hallucination which Hugo sometimes reached in his contemplation of the deep chasms of history (see especially *Contemplations*): from these experiences he became convinced that a deep restlessness comparable with the worst damnation runs through the whole system of the universe. But after his religious crisis in Jersey, and in the superhuman effort he made to intellectualise his vision, he came to regard all tragedy as a mere appearance, without any practical value. The approaching advent of perfect political liberty would make the perception of it impossible even for the most clear-sighted genius.

The devil's best trick, Baudelaire used to say, is to convince you that he does not exist. In Hugo, the subsisting element of the

¹ Paul Zumthor has published a book entitled *Victor Hugo, poète de Satan* (ROBERT LAFFONT), in which the problem of romantic Satanism is studied in the light of hitherto unused documents. (Editor's note.)

"mal du siècle" acted chiefly as an incitement to this unconscious Luciferian revolt. More or less admittedly, there is present in the notion of progress the idea that the world can do without God, because it is itself God. In spite of ambiguous rhetoric, suffering is conceived as something external to life, and an overbold introspection is felt to be a compromise with the enemy. Progressivist philosophy ended by losing its persuasive force, for it became less and less able to embrace innumerable individual destinies. Progress dissociated itself from history and ended up in a bourgeois mirage. From relatively early times men of acute sensibilities had had a presentiment of this evolution, and unconsciously sought to preserve themselves from it by transferring the principal "values" of romanticism exclusively to the plane of art: so for Byron, as for the young Vigny, the myth of Satan did not have the social and metaphysical significance that Hugo wished to confer on it, but represented the poetic incarnation of Beauty, cursed and blessed—of greatness, of nobility, beautiful because unhappy, unhappy because too proud not to want to be divine. Hence there came about a reversal of perspectives: man, bound to misery by his destiny, said "yes" to the latter and thus found himself linked to Beauty, and so to evil. It is obvious that this attitude supposes at the origin a highly acute moral sense—a sense which was completely lacking in Hugo and his peers. And yet, when Baudelaire, in *Les Fleurs du Mal* or *Le Spleen de Paris*, rose against the oversimplified philosophy of progress, he perceived the existence of Satan the tempter only through the poetic creation at which he was working. It is true that his experience of the tragic is set in a living context, but his poetry is constructed like an autonomous world, where the spirit is the only master and can think out that experience in complete freedom:

"un ange imprudent voyageur
qu'a tenté l'amour du difforme"

isolates from existence its element of the tragic and of beauty, and

"au fond d'un cauchemar énorme"

which was his own poet's vision, his poem, he struggled with the world's deformation, building up its symbols,

“emblèmes nets, tableau parfait
d’une fortune irrémédiable”

and at last finding in them a kind of “relief”,

“la conscience dans le Mal”.

In other words, there is no purity in life, but the world of art offers us a possibility of purity, in the perfect lucidity of the tragic. Literature is opposed to life as is conscience to experience. Nevertheless Baudelaire did not attain along this road to the perfect serenity which Mallarmé was later to reach. At the heart of the poetic world which he had erected, he did not succeed in attenuating the notions of good and evil. The feeling of a moral “difference” remains, not, as in life, in the form of a double pull—rather as the presence of a double testimony, within the poem itself, preventing complete blindness, preventing choice, preventing also revolt. This presence is seen in the numerous “qu’importe?” of the *Fleurs du Mal*: hell or heaven, Satan or God. Baudelaire’s poetic experience was more and more centred on this point: it seemed to him that the deep nature of art contained two opposite possibilities of plenitude (evil, good), without the artist’s ever being able finally to identify beauty with one or the other. Throughout Baudelaire’s work the persistence of moral values at the heart of a poetic universe which, according to his first aspirations, should be free from them, constitutes the true revelation of Satan to the poet’s spirit. It is indeed a manifestation of a kind of practical ambivalence of the interior life, and of our natural inability to arrive at an ontological plenitude. Satan, no less than God, is a permanent temptation; but (to consider the work in its entirety) temptation alone. Art does not find it necessary to blossom out in him, any more than in God. But poetry is henceforth a living proof among us that both God and the devil are there.

It would seem that, in the spiritual history of the nineteenth century, Baudelaire’s case is in this respect less historically explicable than any other. It represents a type of experience which I would like to call, metaphorically, “para-mystical”—all the more so because it occurs, I believe, almost exclusively on the plane of artistic creation. Will it be granted me that the “situation”

(as Thibaudet used to say) of Baudelaire was more really on the fringe of his century than that even of Lautréamont or of Rimbaud? It is at any rate true to say that the *Fleurs du Mal* or *Le Spleen de Paris* are like something washed up on the shore of the Romantic current (whereas Baudelaire the critic sometimes plunges right into it). His poetic work, as creation, represses the profound impulse to deny the internal cancer of our nature—that impulse which, rising from the deeps of 1789, was still flowing through the opening years of the twentieth century. Baudelaire's aestheticism, because it tries to create, outside life and social experience, a valid environment for the spirit, contradicts the fundamental tendency of the world from which it came. And by an almost symbolic coincidence, hardly had he died than Isidore Ducasse made his appearance in France; one might well believe that the romantic spirit wished to avenge itself on the dead poet by shaking the very foundations of artistic creation. For the sick adolescent who signed himself Lautréamont and who, having escaped from the narrowness of a bourgeois family, transposed the inner conflict of his eighteen years into terms of the entire universe of forms and fixed traditions, the social and economic world of the "men of progress" seemed a sickening absurdity. But the world of beauty was equally absurd. Lautréamont linked Baudelaire with Hugo in his condemnation of the "poètes du désespoir", of the propagandists of doubt: the one for believing in the natural goodness of a world which experience had shown to be evil; the other for teaching the ambiguity of the spirit. He condemned doubt and despair—everything that can deprive the spirit of the certainty of its absolute existence, *hic et nunc*. No, the human spirit becomes really aware of its own life only when in contact with that which denies it. Hope and certainty lie in destruction, the spirit's only chance of proving the infallibility of its powers. To conceive man's whole hideousness is, in the end, to find his integrity. "I use my genius to paint the delights of cruelty—delights which are not transitory, artificial, but which began with man, and will end with him. Why should genius not ally itself with cruelty in the secret resolutions of Providence?" Replying as it were to the optimistic pan-sexualism on which Hugo had based his cosmogony, Lautréamont glorified his pact with prostitution, which breaks up the love instinct: "I prefer you," he says. "It is not your fault if eternal justice created you".

The only love which is unstained by doubt and despair is that of Maldoror for the child he kills, that of the executioner for his victim. It becomes a redeeming love when, through the genius of a poet, it reaches the whole of humanity. And the poet laboriously leads one through the dark ways of his epic until, as regards his equals and their world, he arrives at a kind of monstrous, abstract and almost mathematical love—a love so abstract that only hatred can “humanly” express it and respond to it. “Stirred up by some spirit from hell” the “men of wrath” collaborate in this enterprise. The meaning of the word “hell” must not be defined too closely, for the denial of all artistic or intellectual forms forbade Lautréamont to seek in it more than a stylistic figure. Besides, Satan is literally absent from his work. But words are no longer even signs or symbols here, rather, exhalations of a subjacent reality. We must look further: it is certain that the author’s psychic attitude to his book corresponds fairly closely (by an analogy as far-fetched as you like, but an analogy nevertheless) to what our spirit can conceive of the devil’s direct action in this world. Not that I wish to speak naïvely of any “satanism” in Lautréamont. But his work is an outstanding example of what should be called one of Satan’s tactics—and no doubt the most expedient of them in a world where the progressivist myth was fading away. More concretely: Lautréamont shared with the “great” romantics, with Baudelaire even, that obsession with damnation which led the former to deny hell in order to escape from it, and the latter to make of it a category of the spirit and art. But he himself rejected the universe whose structure made this obsession possible: love, suffering, evil, God. He rejected Satan. And left thus alone, he gave birth to these new forms and spirits “begotten by the stormy overflowing of a love which has resolved not to appease its thirst among the human race.” This love is incarnate in Maldoror, as the emanation of the destructive power set working by Logic. “Man is no longer the great mystery.” Pure “creation” triumphs over the “work”. The poet has rejected the theological Satan but he has re-made him through himself, re-made the action of the devil as a new illusion of salvation.

“Here lies an adolescent who died consumptive: you know why”. Maldoror and Lautréamont disappear, the one from the work, the other from the world, noiselessly. Their light went out and

the revolt ended in hypnotism. It all happened as if history (in the decline of the Second Empire, when the *Imperium* was ending in failure) had used adolescents of genius to manifest the spiritual crisis: but the adolescent element in these individual revolts also explains why they pass into death—or silence. They remain on this side of man's maturity, and occupy a place in our memory more as a cause of surprise than as a temptation: there is a certain opaque quality in maturity which prevents the rebel from believing himself to be absolutely pure. What twentieth century poets have drawn from Lautréamont and Rimbaud can hardly be compared with their work save from a technical point of view: doubtless the tendency to abstract logic shown in surrealism goes back to Lautréamont. As for Rimbaud, the manner of his revolt, compared with that of Maldoror, makes of it something more like a return to humanism. "To be alive, that is the horror". The point of departure seems identical, but the spurt of hatred followed a different curve. The goal here was not so much to remake the world as to escape from life. The Promethean love of humanity had no place in the heart of this young man for whom the universal tragedy existed only within himself, finding there its one measure of dignity and suffering. All communication with others was cut off. "I can no longer speak"; "I have never been a Christian". Rimbaud tried the experiment of the savage pitched into the birth of the world, for whom his own history is not even a dream of the future. This prodigious stripping away of everything left at least one ultimate and sufficing certainty, the sight of "l'étendue de son innocence", of the integrity of his nature, of his perfection in "the order of being". He clung to it, for it was the only matter offered to him on which he could remake himself. From the *Illuminations* to the *Saison en enfer*, "Innocence" rises, asserts herself, finds her bearings, seeks herself again, in those corrosive pages where the world breaks up around her. Around her, and also within her, for to win for oneself the state of pure innocence means not only to make a void in the surrounding "hell" but also to expel from oneself the Satanic miasmas within one. "I die of thirst, I am choking, I can no longer cry out. It is hell, eternal suffering. See how the fire rises! I am burning, really burning. *Va, démon!* But the shame and the reproach of it is this—Satan tells me how base a thing fire is, how incredibly silly my anger is." Hell is all that is not my innocence. Satan, the world's invading

spirit, is present within me and tortures me, humiliates and ruins me! When he aspires to possess "the truth in a soul and in a body" Rimbaud dreams of expelling Satan from himself. To set Satan free as a corrupting essence is, literally, to create; it is to make oneself God. Satan will owe the poet his liberation from his present condition as a parasite of souls; and the poet will owe to himself his own reintegration in the total purity of his being. "It was indeed hell; the ancient hell whose gates were opened by the son of man. . . . When shall we go, beyond the strands and the mountains, to greet the birth of the new work, the new wisdom, the flight of tyrants and demons, the end of superstition, to adore—and to be the first to adore!—Christmas on earth". Rimbaud was then on the eve of silence. Words for him had ceased to express things other than themselves, in their confused ambiguity. The "Satan is no longer" of Hugo becomes inverted; Satan exists, but henceforth outside the bounds of history. Satan leaves the condition of humanity and regains his angelic autonomy; man thereby frees himself from his own life. His ordinary state, that of bearing the burden of infernal power, alternately warring against it and compromising with it, is about to end. . . . And here probably is the term of the Romantic experience: Satan is finally rejected from every explanatory system, and men close their eyes upon a nightmare, to escape from the reality of his presence.

PAUL ZUMTHOR

THE DEVIL IN GOGOL AND DOSTOIEVSKI

WHY Gogol and Dostoievski? Because the one is, in a way, the father of the other. Both set themselves the Russian problem in the fullness of its implications; the problem which still troubles us, though in a different manner. What is Russia's place among the nations? What mission has Providence assigned to her? While yet hardly freed from her past, and hesitant about her future, the Russia of the last century was seeking herself through the voice of her great writers. Gogol and Dostoievski both dreamed of a Russia who would at last become fully aware of her Christian mission, who would know how to produce the lines of her future from her past, who would achieve heroism and harmony. They both tried to present her with this portrait of herself. But they both failed. Gogol was never able to finish *Dead Souls*, any more than Dostoievski could finish *The Brothers Karamazov*. Is not this double failure due to the fact that each of them became fascinated by the Russian devil?

Gogol, for example, dreamed of heroic and moving scenes, but wrote *The Government Inspector*. This bitter comedy, in which the vices of the Tsarist bureaucracy are laid bare, is well-known. A hive of thieves, swindlers and extortioners in a distant provincial town is set buzzing by the prospect of an inspector's visit. This Inspector, however—Hlestakov—is a practical joker, and the farce ends with the intervention of a real representative of the Emperor. It would not be forcing the author's intentions to see in this comedy some sort of symbol, not only of the Russian reality, but also of the author himself and of humankind.

Hlestakov here acts as a reagent. This society would not know its own rottenness if a Hlestakov had not appeared in its midst—an impostor who triggers off all the impostures around him. And is not Satan himself the impostor *par excellence*, who wishes to put himself in God's place? Milton could not help endowing him with greatness—a manifestation, perhaps, of

British pride. An essentially insular soul was fired by the evocation of that celestial war which had all the appearance of a war for liberty. But the Russian soul is very different. It is acutely conscious of its essential degradation. That is why the Russian devil is a cheap cardboard "flat", devoid of all greatness.

Hlestakov is indeed the devil, around whom dance and crawl all the vices which he has himself unveiled. But he is fundamentally a mediocre creature, false and bragging. He does not appeal to sentiments perverse yet sublime, but to whatever he finds most mediocre and most cowardly in us. The angel's apparition reduces him to dust. But until then he swaggers and preens himself. It is he who reigns in Russia, wherever the rays of grace do not penetrate. Russia is vast, flat, dismal, bored. The devil comes out of a yawn, one of those yawns which, according to Baudelaire, would swallow the world. Hlestakov is bored in this little provincial town where he has been compelled to stop through lack of money. How can he amuse himself? He will pass himself off as an Inspector; and therein lies the whole comedy.

But was there not a Hlestakov in Gogol himself? One would have to be very ignorant of his life to deny it. Hlestakov haunted him, in the strongest sense of the word; that is to say, he dwelt within him, and Gogol could not be rid of him until his death. Who among us is not a Hlestakov? That is the question which takes us by the throat, and which Gogol posed again, with even deeper anguish, in *Dead Souls*. This was to be a picture of Russia, the first part of which was to show the shadows, while the other two parts would lead us a little further towards the light. Unfortunately only the first two parts were written, and Gogol therein managed to construct a character even more diabolical than Hlestakov—the immortal Tchitchikov. He too was a mediocrity, perfectly versed in exploiting the mediocrity of others.

The strange theme of *Dead Souls* is well known. The whole story turns on a gigantic and puerile swindle. Tchitchikov buys a number of serfs who still figure in the registers of the civil State, but who in fact are dead. He pretends to have transported them into barren regions which the Government wants to cultivate. There the unfortunate serfs will officially die and the crook will receive a large indemnity. Once again, it is impossible not to see a symbol, which is moreover stressed by the title of the book. Serfs were, no doubt, known as "souls" in Russia, and the title

could just as well be translated, "Dead Serfs". But surely the devil makes similar transactions with God and with men. He fights the Almighty for souls, but in reality he only receives dead souls, those which have lost all value. As for the souls themselves, he has previously deceived them, to be deceived in his turn by this harvest of nothingness.

Such, then, is the picture of the unctuous, mealy-mouthed Tchitchikov. His business does not hold together, any more than Hlestakov's imposture, but it is precisely in this that they are diabolical. He visits the owners, drinks and eats at their expense. He finds favour and inspires a certain confidence—after all, he dresses like everyone else, he endorses all the opinions he hears with remarkable impartiality: who could distrust Tchitchikov? It is true that information about him is somewhat vague and uncertain. His origin is not unquestionable and the business he proposes seems suspect. Well, who cares? In the world of today one cannot be so fussy. Tchitchikov's dupes are also his accomplices. And Gogol ends his first part with those pages which I wish I could quote in their entirety. I shall give their conclusion, which was later to inspire Dostoievski.

"And what Russian doesn't love it [the sleigh drive]? Could it be otherwise, when his soul longs to forget, to soar, at times to say: 'The devil take all!' How could one not love this drive, when it produces such a wonderful intoxication? It is as if some unknown power had swept one up on his wing. One is flying, and everything else is flying too: the posts, the merchants sitting on the edge of their wagons, the forest on both sides, the dark stretches of pines and fir-trees, the sound of the axes and the croaking of blackbirds; the entire road is flying and loses itself in the distance. There is something terrifying in these brief apparitions, when objects have no time to fix themselves; only the sky, the light clouds and the moon appearing through them seem to be still. Oh! troika, troika-bird, who invented you? You could only be born among bold people; upon that earth which has done nothing by halves, and which has spread like a pool of oil over half the world, so that the eyes would tire before they had counted the versts. It may be admitted that the vehicle is not a complicated one; it was not constructed with iron screws, but haphazardly put

together, with the axe and the cooper's adze, by the skilful moujik of Iaroslav. The driver wears no strong foreign boots; with his beard and his mittens he sits God knows how; and yet, as soon as he rises and gesticulates and begins to sing, the horses bound forward impetuously, the spokes become one continuous smooth surface, the earth trembles, the startled pedestrian cries out, and the troika flees, devouring space. . . . Already, far away, one can see something cleaving and piercing the air.

"And you, Russia, do you not fly like the breathless troika which nothing can outdistance? You speed noisily by in a cloud of dust, leaving all behind. The spectator stops, astonished by this divine prodigy. Is it lightning fallen from heaven? What can this frantic and terrifying race mean? What unknown power lies hidden in these horses which the world has never seen? O chargers, sublime chargers! What whirlwinds stir your manes? Your trembling bodies seem to listen. Hearing the familiar song above them, they swell out their brazen breasts in unison, and, hardly grazing the earth with their hooves, form but a taut line which cleaves the air. So flies Russia in divine inspiration. . . . Where do you run? Answer! But there is no answer. The little bell chimes melodiously; the troubled air flutters and eddies in gusts; everything on earth is overtaken, and, with an envious look, the other nations step aside to give it right of way" (*Dead Souls*).

This brilliant page is not as irrelevant to our subject as it appears, for it is after all Tchitchikov who has climbed into the troika, and when the Prosecutor in *The Brothers Karamazov* takes up Gogol's image in the peroration of his indictment, it is with legitimate anxiety that he speaks of the bolting troika.

Gogol's devil is thus the product of a pent-up boredom born of the flat, vast wastes of land around. It is the same boredom that carries away the troika which delights Tchitchikov as much as it delights all Russians. The devil would not be so dangerous if he were not crouching in the inner core of our very selves. To quote the prince, who intervenes at the end of *Dead Souls*, just as he intervened at the end of *The Government Inspector*; "The country succumbs already, not as the result of an invasion by twenty nations, but through our own fault." Gogol himself is Hlestakov; he is also Tchitchikov. He almost came to see

it in the last years of his life, and that, fundamentally, is the reason why *Dead Souls* was never finished. There was no way of getting rid of the devil. In vain was he expelled into dry places; always he would reappear. In vain were beautiful and stirring literary works attempted; the best, artistically, were always those in which his grotesque grin had been captured and in which one could raise a laugh at his expense. Gogol was condemned to that very realistic observation from which he so much wanted to free himself. He could not help opposing the harmony of Pushkin (who had been his great model and who had even given him the themes of *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls*) with a different music, no less powerful, but which fixed the grinning image of the Reprobate over the threshold of Russian literature.

It is indeed impossible, where Gogol is concerned, to ignore the biographical element in an exegesis of his works. His case is unique in this sense: he was a writer who was naturally attracted by the most noble images, and who was condemned to succeed only in the painting of vileness. Moreover, in order to depict with such force the vices and blemishes of humanity, it is not only necessary to have the roots of them within oneself, but also to oppose them violently from within. Gogol worked on *Dead Souls* during his stays in Italy, while he was in a state of enchantment over the light of Rome, and while Russia seemed to him a place of exile. But wherever he was, he could not wholly detach himself from his distant country. Although he refused to return to it, he had really never left it. It haunted him, and perhaps he never understood it better than when he was absent from it. Add to that the religious torments which filled all the latter part of his existence. He ended up by disowning the art which had been his whole life. And why? On the one hand because he felt a kind of powerlessness to realise his dream; on the other, because art seemed to him to be bound up with some diabolical influence.

I have purposely restricted myself to Gogol's two principal works, which are the least known to the Western public. But it would not have been difficult to make similar observations with regard to others: *The Nose*, for example. Not only does the devil hold a pre-eminent place in Gogol's work, but the author's whole life represents a long and exhausting struggle against the inner demon; a kind of dialogue with this mysterious guest interrupted only by death. A careful search would reveal him in

Pushkin also. Only there he is conquered and brought down. Evil, according to Pushkin, never totally destroys the essential harmony. But this triumph was not granted to Gogol. The Emperor's envoys who intervene both at the end of *The Government Inspector* and of *Dead Souls* are to some extent "dei ex machina". They come from the author's will far more than from the nature of things. The appeal to Good is a cry from the bottom of the chasm; but the vermin will crawl again as soon as the celestial messenger has turned his back. So much is this the case that Gogol's work ends in a poignant question; how can the devil be finally exorcised? How can man be given back his primitive nobility and purity? In no other literature perhaps is the nostalgia of the lost paradise so strong as in the Russian. We meet with it again in Dostoievski, who is, in many ways, Gogol's successor. But one factor is curiously absent from Gogol's work; this is the idea of redemption. The celestial envoys I mentioned do not bring redemption, and do not speak in the name of the Redeemer. They are rather the delegates of a higher and luminous world; they break into the darkness for a moment, only to let it close down again afterwards. One might be under the ancient Law and in the time of the Promise. It was for Dostoievski to meet Christ and to suggest, in spite of a thousand difficulties, what His exorcism can do against the devil.

The role of the devil in Dostoievski's work is so central, so essential, that in order to keep this study to reasonable proportions, I shall limit myself to a rapid examination of a few principal works. Let us first consider *Crime and Punishment*. Everyone knows the story; of how the student Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov decides to murder an old woman-usurer, not so much to escape from his great poverty—for there were other means of doing this—but to prove to himself that he is capable of living according to his own law. If that is the case, the world belongs to him; and here already is one of the three temptations later evoked in "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor". As soon as the crime is committed—and it has not quite turned out as Raskolnikov had imagined it, since he had also to murder the usurer's sister, a pure and upright soul—the devil seizes the criminal and haunts him in the form of the proprietor Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov is essentially an *ennuyé*, haunted by evil dreams: that, for instance, of the country-house full of spiders which so curiously resembles hell. He lives in a

room partitioned off from that of Sonia, and hears Raskolnikov confess his crime to her. For if Svidrigailov is the devil, Sonia is the angel. Each is installed in the soul of Raskolnikov, who has no secret from either.

Thus the whole drama of *Crime and Punishment* revolves round a struggle between two worlds: the higher and the lower. Raskolnikov has killed two women—one bad, the other good; the one (who may be said to animate the soul of Svidrigailov) able only to think of revenge; the other, who animates Sonia's soul, a forgiver of wrongs and an intercessor for the salvation of her murderer. Thus also Raskolnikov's soul is divided between good and evil. Sonia can only pray, but if Raskolnikov does not freely submit, if he does not humiliate himself as far as to confess his crime, and confess publicly, the angel's prayer will have been in vain. Sonia finally wins, and that is why she is allowed to accompany Raskolnikov to the place of punishment, which is at the same time that of redemption; while Svidrigailov, the vanquished devil, hangs himself.

In *The Idiot*, everything is more subtle and more obscure. No character is truly demoniac, like Svidrigailov. Nevertheless the devil has already deeply ravaged the society in which Prince Myshkin finds himself, and always, as in Gogol, the devil is utterly insipid. It is he who jests with Ferdischenko, he whose ridiculous and sickly pride is found again in Gania; it is he who quickens the crawling and viscous baseness of Lebedev. But it is he especially who rages implacably against Nastasia Philippovna. Prince Myshkin enters the lists to contend for this victim of his choice. Nastasia Philippovna is known to be a creature of dazzling beauty, and this physical beauty is but the sign of an admirable spiritual integrity. But she has been corrupted in youth by the man who had established himself as her protector. Totski is the very type of emancipated nobleman of the 'forties who plays such a great role in Dostoevski's work. He has apparently seen nothing wrong in abusing a young orphan girl whom he has brought up especially for that purpose. But Nastasia has been fatally injured. The prince has only to look at a photograph of the young woman to see this: "It is an extraordinary face! And I am convinced that this woman's destiny cannot be commonplace. Her expression is gay, and yet she must have suffered much, don't you think? It can be read in her look, and

also in those two small protuberances that form two points under her eyes, on the verge of the cheeks. The face is excessively proud; but I cannot see if it is good or evil. Oh, that it could be good: all would be saved!"

Now that he has succeeded in bruising her, the devil uses Nastasia as bait for the converging desires of General Epanchin, of Gania and especially of Rogozhin. The last-named is, in certain ways, truly possessed. It is first by his eyes that Myshkin recognises him. This is the first portrait of Rogozhin:

"He was of small build, and seemed about twenty-seven years old: his hair was curled and almost black; his eyes were grey and small, but full of fire. His nose was flat, his cheekbones prominent; on his pinched lips was a continual smile that was impertinent, mocking and even spiteful. But his broad and well-modelled forehead made up for the lack of nobility in the lower part of his face. What was particularly striking in the face was its pallor, and its look of utter exhaustion, although the man was fairly strongly built; one saw in it also something passionate, something suffering, which was in contrast with the insolence of the smile and the provocative self-conceit of the expression."

When, long afterwards, Myshkin, returning from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, arrived at the station without being met, "he suddenly thought he saw a pair of burning eyes which were staring at him very strangely in the crowd surging round the travellers. He tried to find where this gaze came from but could no longer see it. Perhaps it was only an illusion, but it left an unpleasant impression." Soon after, Myshkin visits Rogozhin in the dark house where he lives. And, at the end of their conversation, Rogozhin cuts the pages of Soloviev's *History of Russia* with a little garden-knife, brand-new, which, later, he is to use to murder Nastasia Philippovna, on the evening of their marriage. When Rogozhin sees the prince to the door, the latter stops for an instant before a copy of a Holbein representing the Saviour after the Descent from the Cross. Rogozhin murmurs: "I like to look at that picture."

"That picture," cries the Prince in sudden inspiration. "But do you know that a believer could lose his faith by looking at it?"

"Yes, one loses one's faith," agrees Rogozhin unexpectedly. Then Rogozhin asks the Prince to give him his cross; he gets his mother to give him her blessing, and this is the end of this extraordinary scene:

"'You see,' said Rogozhin, 'my mother understands nothing of what is said; she has not grasped the sense of my words, and yet she has blessed you. So she has acted spontaneously . . . Come, goodbye. For you, as for me, it is time to separate.' And he opened the door.

"'Let me at least embrace you before we part; how odd you look!' exclaimed the prince with a look of tender reproach.

"He wanted to take him in his arms, but the other, who had already raised his, dropped them abruptly. He could not make up his mind, and his eyes avoided the Prince. He could not bring himself to embrace him.

"'Don't be afraid,' he said, in an expressionless voice and with a strange smile, 'even if I have taken your cross, I won't murder you for your watch.'

"But his face suddenly changed: a terrible pallor came over it; his lips quivered, his eyes blazed. He opened his arms, embraced the Prince violently, and said in a strangled voice, 'Take her then, if that is the will of Destiny. She is yours. I give her up to you. Remember Rogozhin.'

"And, turning from the Prince without another glance, he went hastily back into his room and slammed the door."

The Prince, however, is haunted all day by that look of Rogozhin's, which he had noticed on arriving at the station, met again in the street, and which seems to pursue him; he comes across it again while roaming through St. Petersburg, until at last he finds Rogozhin waiting for him, hidden in an alcove in the dark entrance to his house, and holding some shining object in his hand—the same knife he had used to cut the pages of *The History of Russia*; Rogozhin is lying in wait to kill him. The Prince, thereupon, has an attack of epilepsy, which saves him from the dagger thrust. Rogozhin runs away like a madman. It is not the Prince, but Nastasia Philippovna who is to fall by that knife.

If I have dwelt rather long on this episode of *The Idiot*, it is because it shows vividly the warfare between good and bad spirits.



Pl. 20. Pablo Picasso. *Figure Monstrueuse*.



Pl. 21. Goya. *Witches' Sabbath*, detail. From the collection of the Duke of Tovar. Madrid. (After R. Cogniat, *Goya*.)



Pl. 22. Dürer. *The Knight, Death and the Devil*, detail. (Photo Giraudon.)

Rogozhin is not wholly bad, any more than Myshkin is wholly good. If the Prince had not, in spite of himself, ascribed to Rogozhin the intention of killing him, perhaps that intention would not exist. As for Rogozhin, he struggles fiercely with his own temptations. Myshkin himself recognises it, when he remembers Rogozhin's strange remark about the Holbein picture: "That man must suffer terribly. He says he 'likes to look at this picture of Holbein'." It isn't that he likes looking at it, but that he needs to look at it. Rogozhin is not only a passionate soul, he has also the fighter's temperament: he wants at all costs to regain the faith he has lost. He feels the need of it, and is suffering . . . Yes, to believe in something! To believe in someone!" As we can see, the devil is everywhere here, and we would be very much mistaken if we thought him to be wholly absent even from the soul of Myshkin.

Nastasia Philippovna would not have so completely bewitched them both if she had not herself been, in her own way, possessed—possessed by her own shame, which she is unable to accept. And it is from perversity, as Rogozhin himself observes, that she finally decides to marry him, and that to do so she avoids the Prince. It is not to her wedding that she flees, but to her death, to that ineluctable death which Rogozhin has long prepared for her and which she prefers to life itself. Her death means checkmate to Myshkin, and plunges him back into that idiocy from which he had only emerged for a while to accomplish a task which he was incapable of carrying through to the end. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Rogozhin's father was a merchant who belonged to that sect of Old Believers which continued in Russia till the end of the old regime, and that Rogozhin himself, in the opinion of Prince Myshkin and Nastasia Philippovna, would have been in every way like his father, had he not encountered the strange creature who was no longer capable of anything but self-destruction, and the destruction of others. I must leave aside the large group of secondary characters, although they are closely connected with the central drama, some of them—especially the young Hippolytus—being exceptionally interesting in relation to our theme.

But now we come to *The Possessed*, or rather, *The Demons*, to translate the Russian title literally. Dostoevski headed his work with two epigraphs, one of them a quotation from Pushkin:

"We have strayed, what shall we do?
The devil is dragging us through the fields
Making us turn in all directions."

.

"How many are they, where are they driven?
What can their mournful chanting mean?
Are they burying a goblin
Or marrying a witch?"

The other text is simply Luke viii. 32-7, and tells the story of the evil spirits entering the swine.

The author's intentions are thus particularly clear. It is also easy to say that the demons are the companions of Peter Stepanovitch Verkhovenski. But who is the man out of whom these demons came in order to enter the swine? There can be no question: it is Nicholas Vsevolodovitch Stavrogin. But in spite of what has happened, he himself has not been delivered: he is the archdemon among these demons. Motionless and empty, like the spider in the middle of her web, he animates all the others. His own pact is anterior to the story. We only learn something of it when we listen to his confession. What is interesting is that he has been the pupil of Stepan Trophimovitch, who is himself the father of the horrible and shallow Peter Stepanovitch who leads the hideous gang for the benefit of Stavrogin and under his soulless eye. Here the theme of *Dead Souls* is taken up again, with more depth. It is that of the tragic contest between Russia and the West which has continued ever since Peter the Great. Stepan Trophimovitch is an "Occidental", pedantic, pretentious, hypocritical and a little ridiculous, something like the great critic Bielinski, who flourished in the same period. He is filled with noble and humanitarian ideas, which he tries to impart to his pupil. As for his son, he takes little interest in him. From his mildness, his helplessness and his misunderstood soul were born the furious demons which ravage Russia.

This is not the place to discuss the validity of this viewpoint. It was, at any rate, that of Dostoievski. The demons are more interesting because they are authentic. At the centre of the work there is the fascinating character of Stavrogin. He is not mediocre; on the contrary, he is a man endowed with very great gifts. He

can hardly be said to be haunted, except perhaps by nothingness. It is the vacuity of this soul which draws like an abyss and causes a kind of giddiness. Stavrogin is bored, not as Svidrigailov is bored, but with a metaphysical ennui. He is seeking the limit of his power, and all the experiments he undertakes seem to him vain. Out of pride, he tries to degrade himself, for, he thinks, his essence is such that no humiliation can really touch him. Nevertheless he is seized at times by attacks of genuine possession. One such occasion is when he leads a very respectable gentleman around the room holding him by his nose; another, when he savagely bites the ear of the provincial governor, after pretending that he wanted to whisper a secret to him. At such moments he is very pale, and those standing round wonder if he is in full possession of himself. But the point is never elucidated. In Stavrogin, we puzzle over the very mystery of evil, which seems to be loved and cultivated for its own sake, quite disinterestedly. It could be said of Stavrogin, as of Lucifer, that he has made a value of evil. All victims are acceptable to him, whether it is the unfortunate young girl who hangs herself after he has dishonoured her, or Chatov whom he leads to death after having deceived and betrayed him, or the lame Maria Timopheievna, whom he marries one day as a mockery and whom he later has murdered by the bandit Fedka; or Elisabeth Nikolaievna, his fiancée, who crawls at his feet while he gazes at the city in flames; or even Dasha, the devoted girl who would like to be his guardian angel, and yet cannot prevent him from hanging himself ignominiously in an attic. Stavrogin cannot be interested in his victims because he is incapable of loving. Love is so entirely dead to him that he no longer loves even himself.

I must leave aside the secondary demons who fill the novel—even the agitated and self-sufficient Peter Stepanovitch who seems to be the leader of the infernal band. He is nothing more than the reflection of Stavrogin, and it is perhaps the latter's deep thought which he one day suggests to the engineer Kirilov, convincing him that if man can once for all master his own death, he will have killed God and replaced Him, for there are only two possibilities: either God becomes man to save us, or else man becomes God and saves himself. Stavrogin knows the vanity of such ambitions. He himself, like the guilty archangel, believes in God, and admits it in his confession. But he has placed himself

against God, as an adversary, whom the Almighty may vanquish, but not subdue.

It is not impossible, I know, to find some sort of Byronic romanticism in a character such as Stavrogin. The narrator himself is fascinated by his presence. Maria Timopheievna calls him an impostor, but she is under his influence, and one of the most significant scenes is that in which the half-mad lame girl tells Stavrogin what he was and is:

"You are like him, you are very like him. Perhaps you are related. Oh, the cunning creatures! . . . Only mine is a radiant falcon and a prince, while you are only a bat, a little shop-keeper. If he likes, mine will bow before God, and if he doesn't, he won't. And Chatouchka, my darling, good and dear Chatouchka, has struck you full in the face. Lebiadkine told me about it. What were you afraid of when you came in? What had frightened you? When I saw your common face—when I fell down and you picked me up—I felt as if a worm had climbed into my heart. That's not *he*, I thought, no, that's not *he*. My falcon would never have been ashamed of me in front of a young society woman. My God! The one thing that has kept me happy throughout these five years is the thought of my falcon living there, across the mountains, where he floats in the air and gazes at the sun. Tell me, impostor, were you paid a lot? Was it for the large sum of money that you gave your consent? I wouldn't have given you a penny. Ha, ha, ha. . . ."

And in the end, as he flees from her insults, she shouts to him: "Grishka Otrepiev, a-na-thema." Moreover, it is sufficient to observe the titles Dostoievski has given to certain chapters—all of them about Stavrogin—to grasp his intention. There is the chapter called "Prince Harry", that is to say the proud Henry V of England, the man of Falstaff and of Agincourt; there is "The Sins of Others", the sins for which Stavrogin makes the innocent Chatov pay; there is "The Subtle Serpent", obviously that of Genesis; there is "Ivan Tsarevitch". This mingling of grandeur and imposture, this glimpse of the archangel behind the archfiend, the sinister bat which takes the place of the falcon in the sun—all this characterizes Stavrogin, a unique person who had to be placed as a sort of model at the centre of this study, and who

cannot be outdone in grandeur any more than in baseness. Perhaps he is even too great to be real; too great not to be somewhat theoretical.

We return to earth with *The Adolescent*, which contains the split character of Versilov, on whom I ought to dwell longer. But I wish to press on to *The Brothers Karamazov*, in which Dostoievski poured out all he knew of this and the other world. It is the entire Karamazov family which is at the same time angelic and demoniac. The father, Fyodor Pavlovitch, a Russian gentleman by birth, and a parasite, a professional buffoon, belongs to the same category as Svidrigailov. He degrades himself with apparent cheerfulness, but occasionally he gets pathetic in his cups, and asks his son Ivan if God really does not exist. He is vaguely tinged with Western ideas, just enough to hold monks, and old customs, in derision. He is possessed by the devil of sensuality—the especial devil of the Karamazovs. We need not discuss his first wife, who gave him Dmitri, nor Dmitri himself, in whom the demon of sensuality has had to struggle against a fundamentally good and generous nature, which, in the end, is to win.

But the second wife of Fyodor Pavlovitch is a saint and martyr; she has opposed her purity to her husband's sensuality; her spirituality to his materialism. She has consoled herself for his ill-treatment by praying before holy images. She has given him two sons, Ivan and Alyosha. In each of them there remains something of their mother's angelic nature. But Ivan, the University student, has been bitten by the demon of knowledge; in addition to pride, he has acquired a deep hatred and scorn for his father. He is his father's true murderer. Now, however despicable this father may be, he still retains, in spite of himself, the sacred stamp of fatherhood. To raise a hand in cold blood against one's father is of all acts the most diabolical. Ivan dares not do it, but he incites to it the infamous Smerdyakov, who is the fourth Karamazov brother. His mother was a wretched idiot whom Fyodor raped out of bravado and some extraordinary refinement of sensuality. Smerdyakov feels the double humiliation of his birth, and seeks revenge. It is impossible to exaggerate the part played by humiliation in Dostoievski's work. If the humbled one accepts his humiliation, he may rise very high in sanctity; but if it provokes only the reaction of hurt pride in him, he is lost; let us remember Nastasia Philippovna. Smerdyakov

is no less proud than Ivan, and far more humiliated. Henceforth the two men understand each other's hints, and the one can carry out what the other has conceived. Alyosha, on the other hand, although he does not altogether escape from the demon of sensuality which haunts his family, has received an almost wholly angelic nature from his mother, as Romano Guardini has pointed out. Had the novel been completed he would have played the role of a Myshkin, but a Myshkin who succeeded and became the regenerator of Russia. Thus it can be seen that the aim of *The Brothers Karamazov* is not so far removed from that of *Dead Souls*, which was not finished either. And it can also be seen that Dostoievski's entire work is nothing other than a combat between angels and devils, a combat whose outcome is often uncertain, as Milton says.

Moreover, these are not the only diabolical characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Mention must also be made of the young Lisa, who tempts Alyosha, and of the horrifying seminarist, who mocks him. But the character who absorbs our attention even more is Ivan. He has an acute sense of the evil which reigns on earth, and it is by asking Alyosha for some explanation of this evil, and especially of the suffering of the innocent, that he attempts one day to shake his faith. Yet a little before that he says: "I must confess something to you; I have never been able to understand how one can love one's neighbour. To my mind it is precisely one's neighbour whom one cannot love; at any rate, one can only love him at a distance. . . . A man must be hidden before one can love him; as soon as he shows his face, love vanishes." So we find again in him the absence of love which characterised Stavrogin. But he is a much younger and very much more human Stavrogin. For while the latter coldly declares to Chatov that whatever he does, he cannot love him, Ivan on the contrary finds it extremely difficult not to love Alyosha, and he certainly does love Katharina Ivanovna, who was Dmitri's fiancée.

It is because Ivan's soul is still fresh, though corrupted by pride, that he cannot bear the thought of being his father's murderer, and this thought brings on an attack of fever, during which he has an interview with the devil in person. This is the only time that Dostoievski brings the evil one directly on the scene, and an analysis of their dialogue may conclude this all too brief study,

for the devil of Ivan Karamazov is very close to that of Gogol. Here, first, is his physical appearance:

“He was a gentleman, or rather a peculiarly Russian sort of gentleman, *qui frisait la cinquantaine*, going a little grey, with long thick hair and a pointed beard. He was wearing a brown jacket, well cut enough but already rather the worse for wear, at least three years old and thus completely out of fashion. His linen and his long cravat all spoke of the well-dressed man, but on closer inspection the linen revealed itself as of a dubious cleanliness, and the cravat as much soiled. His check trousers sat well on him, but they were too light and too close-fitting—the sort that nobody wears nowadays: his hat was a white felt one, quite out of keeping with the season. In short, a dandy fallen on bad times. He looked like one of those landed proprietors who flourished during the days of serfdom; he had lived in good society, but bit by bit, impoverished by his youthful dissipations and the recent abolition of serfdom, he had become a sort of high-class sponger, admitted into the society of his former acquaintances because of his pliable disposition, as a man one need not be ashamed to know, whom one can invite to meet anybody, only fairly far down the table. These hangers-on—compliant characters, good raconteurs, handy at the card-table, unwilling social errand-boys—are usually widowers or bachelors: sometimes they have children, always brought up somewhere else, usually with some aunt or other whom the gentleman concerned never mentions in good company, as if the relationship embarrassed him. He ends up by losing contact with his children, who write to him from time to time (for his name-day or Christmas) letters of congratulation which he sometimes answers and sometimes doesn’t.

“The expression of this unexpected guest was affable rather than friendly and obviously prepared for whatever politeness the situation might demand. He had no watch, but carried a tortoiseshell lorgnette on a black ribbon. A massive gold ring with a cheap opal adorned the middle finger of his right hand. Ivan Fyodorovitch kept silent, determined that he for his part would not start the conversation. The visitor waited, like a poor relation who, arriving at tea-time to provide company for

the master of the house, finds him preoccupied with his thoughts and remains silent, ready nevertheless for polite conversation if his host initiates it."

Does not this description irresistibly remind one of a character such as Versilov, for instance? In Ivan's devil there is nothing left of that grandeur which we noticed in Stavrogin. He himself admits, with perfect simplicity, that if he is a fallen angel, he has completely forgotten it and has henceforth only one modest ambition: that of passing for a well-bred man. He does not like the fantastic and he does not mind terribly whether people believe in him. He complains of rheumatism contracted in interstellar space where, as we know, it is very cold. When Ivan is astonished to hear that he suffers from such a human infirmity, the devil replies: "If I become incarnate I must suffer the consequences"—*"Satanas sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto."* The devil then chats for a long time and gets himself insulted by Ivan, who feels that he is the victim of a hallucination, but lets himself be taken in. The devil is, of course, also Ivan himself. His progressive and liberal ideas are those of Ivan. His system of future happiness for humanity is that of the Grand Inquisitor, or of Chigalev in *The Possessed*. Listen to him:

"Once the whole of humanity professes atheism—and I believe that this epoch will come in its turn, as inexorably as a geological period—then the old conception of the world will disappear of its own accord, without any cannibalism; and with it the old morality. Men will join together in drawing from life every possible enjoyment, but in this world alone. The human spirit will rise to a titanic pride, and this will be the deification of humanity. Triumphant ceaselessly and limitlessly over nature, by virtue of his knowledge and his power, man will experience thereby a joy so intense that it will replace for him the hope of heaven. Each will know that he is mortal, without hope of resurrection, and will resign himself to death with proud tranquillity, like a god. He will scorn in his pride to murmur at the shortness of life; he will love his brothers with an entirely disinterested love. Love itself will bring only passing joys, but the very knowledge of its transiency will deepen its intensity in proportion as it was once diluted by the hope of an eternal love beyond the tomb. . . ."

It is the return of the golden age, of which Versilov also dreams. It is above all the ultimate outcome of that liberalism of the 'forties, which Dostoievski never tires of attacking. Gogol's devil, and even Dostoievski's, do not consider it beneath them to be commonplace. The devil repeats several times to Ivan: "Do not demand 'the great and the beautiful' from me." He even styles himself Hlestakov grown old, and here the reference to Gogol is direct. Nevertheless he is always the Tempter of Genesis who promises man: "Et eritis sicut dei." Dostoievski's glory lies not only in having lit up these troubled depths, but in having shown that the unfolding of a certain history has no other end than the disappearance of humanity itself from this earth. The devil is more present than ever, and I shall not insult the reader by stressing the analogies constantly suggested by the great Russian writers of the last century. In their country they diagnosed a disease which was not specific to it but was singularly virulent there. Perhaps indeed, it was for Russia, of all nations, to have both the secret of the disease and its remedy. That remedy is love—the love which Alyosha shows, and which he makes his young friends show, to poor Ilyusha: "Is it true," asks Kolya on the day of the child's burial, "what religion says, that we shall rise from the dead, that we shall all see each other again, us and Ilyusha?" "Certainly, we shall rise again, we shall see each other again, we shall tell each other everything that has happened," replies Alyosha.

JACQUES MADAULE

THE DEVIL IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

EVER SINCE he ceased to show himself in physical form with horns and a smell of sulphur, the devil's reign has never been so little contested. This fact has been tellingly pointed out by Denis de Rougemont in his remarkable essay, *La Part du Diable*; and Bernanos says the same in *Monsieur Ouine*, when he makes the Curé of Fenouille explain to the materialistic Doctor Malépine that crime and folly are only the monstrous and aberrant shapes which a supernatural being, whom no one any longer believes in, is forced to assume to make himself manifest. Baudelaire had already told us that "the devil's best trick is to persuade us that he does not exist": and Baudelaire knew something about Satanism. Rougemont comes back to this truth when he says, "The devil's first trick is his incognito", thus summarising in one brief formula the apocryphal pages of the *Faux-Monnayeurs*,¹ entitled "The Identification of the Devil", where Gide shows us that Satan is never better served than by being unknown. One can go further and say that the greater part of contemporary literature wholly refuses to allow the devil any existence whatsoever, thereby bearing witness to him and serving him; and that this "false testimony" could fairly easily be exposed by some kind of psycho-analysis which brings to light what is concealed and changes the implicit into the explicit, the negative into the positive. Moreover, it is not necessarily in the case of expressly atheistic works that a penetrating and revealing analysis would show the most results: we shall in fact see that this wholly null being needs man in order to get a purchase on reality; he subsists only on living spiritual realities which give him "body" with their positiveness, so that he can only appear where there persists some minimum of faith in his opposite, some grain of belief in a super-natural universe, a belief which he can pervert from its true end and induce to serve his own designs:

¹ Published at the end of the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, pp. 141-2.

"Sitôt pétris, sitôt soufflés,
Maître serpent les a sifflés;
Les beaux enfants que Vous créez!"¹

says the poet; and so Bermanos, "sa haine s'est réservé les saints".² We must not, it is true, forget that his name is Legion: but he will certainly be more forcibly present—easier to find, at least—in ambiguous or internally divided works like those of Valéry, Gide, Proust, even, than in those of writers like Sartre, who have deliberately excluded from their vision of the world all elements of a transcendence not originating in man;³ or in books such as Julien Green's *Si j'étais vous*, which bring him rather too openly on the scene, and which almost challenge him.

There is one scruple which must be respected in this subject more than in any other: simple honesty demands that all reflection (however critical and exacting it may become at the end) should begin by accepting wholly the given literary creation and by recognising that it contains its own laws. The rules of the particular game it is proposed to play must be respected, and no judgment should be formed except from within the work itself; a method which is less paradoxical than it seems, for just as three-dimensional beings can know themselves to be living in a non-Euclidian world, so even the lacunae of a work, the "blanks" remaining within it, will reveal aspects of the world outside itself, which it does not know, or which it denies. When we are dealing with such a paradoxical creature as Satan, who desires nothing

¹ VALÉRY, *Ébauche d'un Serpent*.

² In *Sous le Soleil de Satan*.

³ Paradoxical as it may seem, there may be some analogy in the initial metaphysical bearings of Sartre and those of Valéry (in so far as one can compare the author of such a vigorously constructed work as *L'Être et le Néant* with a writer who seems to have prided himself on concealing as much as possible the involuntary coherence of his thought). Certain phrases from Valéry's pen could have been repeated by Sartre: "Man thinks, therefore I am, says the Universe" (*Moralités*, p. 97) recalls both the theory expounded at the beginning of *L'Être et le Néant* (in which man is the one through whom void comes into the world, until then engulfed in the satisfied plenitude of the self) and the rectification, in the last essay of *Situations I*, of the Cartesian doctrine of liberty, which "retrieves" for man's benefit that creative liberty which Descartes had made the sole mistake of alienating by hypostatizing it in God. The "Sometimes I think, sometimes I am" of *Choses Tues* (p. 146) already implies the irreducible dualism between knowledge and being, which is one of the key pieces of Sartrean philosophy. Finally there is a parallel in the watershed followed by the dialectics of the two thinkers, which start from a fierce initial atheism as premiss and go on with an assertion of the pre-existence of Void in relation to being, to end in a "transvaluation of values": expressed in Valéry by the translation of positive into negative, in Sartre by the critique of the notion of objectivity, leading finally to the diverse ambiguities of his position with regard to the subjectivity of values.

more than to pass unnoticed, and yet who needs man's complicity and connivance to manifest himself and become incarnate, we shall do well to keep to the text, and thus avoid the danger of introducing him where he might not have been, had we not thought of him. We will, therefore, restrict ourselves to writers who have expressly *named* him.

I. THE POETS AND THE "DEVIL'S CAUSE"

The problem of evil is never positively broached or squarely faced in Valéry: and yet, in an indirect way, almost in disguise, it haunts the work which has been wholly inspired by the horror of not being unique. This horror is the only force, whether psychological or metaphysical, which the father of *Monsieur Teste* seems capable of understanding: he explains Stendhal through it, in the study devoted to him in *Variété II*, and Semiramis, who, in the "melodrama" for which Honegger wrote the music, kills her lover for having no equal;¹ it is crystallised in *Narcisse*, and is the principle of divine creation and its various anomalies in *Le Cimetière Marin* or *L'Ebauche d'un Serpent*. It also inspires in a meditation on Leonardo² that definition of the philosopher of which the least one can say is that it is a little strange: "Our Philosopher cannot make up his mind not to absorb into his own light all those realities which he would like to assimilate to his own or reduce to possibilities which belong to him. He wants to *understand*: he wants to understand them in the fullest sense of the word. . . ." And again: "In truth, the existence of *others* is always a worry to the splendid egotism of a thinker. . . ." Everywhere outside himself Valéry discovers the monster he carries within: devoured by the secret desire to be God, he cannot bear that anything should exist which is not himself, and he attributes the same jealousy to others, even to God. He is certainly right to denounce the contemporary cult of originality at all costs, the idolatry which prefers novelty to beauty, the modern substitution of temporal disturbance-values for the old ideals which, though not eternal, were at least stable. (There is in him something of Benda—a Benda who does not recognise himself.) But he speaks of this idolatry in a tone of secret complicity; and much of his style, his idiosyncrasies in particular, can hardly be explained except by

¹ *Variété*, iii, p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 148-50.

this frantic desire to *astonish* at all cost, which he so clearly detects in others, even in Pascal: it is with profound but involuntary and unmistakable sympathy that he speaks of those who above all like to be stricken with horror. He is no doubt correct in denouncing the "man of letters" in the author of the *Pensées*; but what else is he? And has he really any right to reproach Pascal for having purposely forced his despair and exaggerated the expression of it in order to produce more moving literary effects—he who completely inverted the sense of a line for reasons of greater euphony,¹ and asserted (without proof) that Racine would not have hesitated to do the same even for the character of Phèdre? He has pursued philosophy with his sarcasms (applauded by the crowd, who are for ever weary of hearing Aristides called the Just), but not without having previously, and perhaps unconsciously, caricatured what he attacked: he seems incapable of conceiving its process, apart from that certain pride of the *homophilosophicus* who thinks himself superior to the artist² when he deigns to apply his mind to the arts, and who resembles Edmond Teste, for example, far more than Alain. Every single arrow with which he has wounded others could turn to be used against him; for he is incapable of seeing or understanding others except by recreating them in his own image. Both in his mockeries and in his cult of Mallarmé, of Leonardo, he reaches only himself. His solitude, is, intellectually speaking, that of Narcissus.

He applies this treatment to God Himself. The sally of Alfred Savoir is well known: "God, they say, created man in His own image. Man has returned the compliment." In the cosmogonic poems, *Charmes*, it might be said without exaggeration that God is

¹ So, in the second verse of *Palmes*, the original text read:

"Admire comme elle vibre
Et comme une lente fibre
Qui divise le moment
Départage avec mystère
L'attrance de la terre
Et le poids du firmament!"

But he altered the fourth line to "Départage sans mystère", which gives exactly the opposite sense to the stanza.

² "What most clearly separates philosophical aesthetics from the reflection of the artist is the fact that it proceeds from a way of thought which considers itself to be alien to the arts and of an essence different from the thought of the poet or composer—in which, I will add at once, it mistakes its own nature. It treats works of art as accidents, particular cases, the effects of an active and industrious sensibility drawing blindly towards a principle of which Philosophy itself has an immediate and pure vision or notion. This activity thus seems *unnecessary*, since its supreme object must directly belong to philosophic thought. . . ." ("Léonard et les Philosophes", in *Variété*, iii, pp. 156-7).

conceived in the image of Monsieur Teste, that is to say as a Valéry who is slightly superior because exaggerated. The horror of not being unique (numerically or qualitatively) leads straight to a jealousy towards God (if one believes in Him) which is truly Luciferian in essence: that is why Valéry can make the serpent speak so well; he, as poet, speaks in his name, as he spoke for *Narcisse* and the *Jeune Parque*, that is to say, in the name of those with whom he can identify himself. He does not give us God's monologue (Hugo, for instance, or Claudel, or Péguy, would not have hesitated to do so) any more than he gives us that of Edmond Teste, whom we catch a glimpse of only through his wife, his friend or his log-book. We do not hear His *I*, or see Him face to face in all His glory.

It is notable that in *L'Ebauche d'un Serpent* the Fall is confused with Creation,¹ the entire responsibility for the existence of the world being thus thrown back on God. Man is absolved. Nor is it surprising to see that Adam does not appear in this cosmogony: he is just a pawn on the metaphysical chess-board of a game which is played without him, between Eve and the Serpent. The Serpent is the first result of that sin of God's, its materialisation, as it were, since the sin is, in its essence, vanity, and since the Serpent himself is nothing more than the complacency² which every creature feels towards itself, that delight in self of which the desire to be unique is the negative side. Being the incarnation of the sin, he has it as his mission to prolong it indefinitely: he is the Other whom God created, who perpetually prevents the world and man from returning to the original void, from being engulfed in softness and ease. The Slanderer tempts Eve by presenting an indefinite series of temporal delights as true Eternity, when they are really its caricature and negation³. The Sun is his accomplice (or his

¹ For example: "Cieux, son erreur. Temps, sa ruine!
Et l'abîme animal, béant. . . !
Quelle chute dans l'origine
Étincelle au lieu de néant. . . !"

² "Qui que tu sois, ne suis-je point
Cette complaisance qui poind
Dans ton âme lorsqu'elle s'aime?
Je suis au fond de sa faveur
Cette inimitable saveur
Que tu ne trouves qu'à toi-même!"

³ "Que si ta bouche fait un rêve,
Cette soif qui songe à la sève,
Ce délice à demi-futur,
C'est l'éternité fondante, Eve!"

mask), who at the poem's outset tinged the void with the gold of his deceptive splendours and prevented—

“Les coeurs de connaître
Que l'univers n'est qu'un défaut
Dans la pureté du Non-Être!”

In favour of the “divine diminution” which existed originally, he tries to perpetuate the world of appearances by preventing man from knowing it as it is. It was indeed God (and not he) who chose that there should be something rather than nothing. God did not have the wisdom of Monsieur Teste in preferring to *be* rather than to *appear*; half through vanity, half through boredom, He was unable to resist the pleasure of creating, and thus He gave life to Satan out of Void—to Satan who avails himself of this one moment of weakness to repeat it indefinitely like an echo, and perpetuate it to the end of time.¹

There is no doubt that Valéry stuck to this cosmogony; it closely corresponds with other essential parts of his work (especially with the meditations on Leonardo and Mallarmé and with everything concerning Monsieur Teste), and the same themes are found in *Le Cimetière Marin*, this time from man's point of view: it is man and not the Serpent (though still the character who speaks and says “I”) who feels he is the result of the Sin, the failure at the heart of the universe, the flaw in the great diamond, the gnawing worm whose presence prevents the world from engulfing itself afresh in the eleatic stillness of a Being which in every way resembles the Void.

These ideas are by no means entirely novel²; they have nevertheless certain rather remarkable features, when stripped of their poetic spells. First of all they are extraordinarily anthropomorphic (a curious trait in a writer who has incessantly denounced in others man's extravagant desire to bring everything back to

¹ Exalting even to Being “l'étrange Toute-Puissance du Néant!”

² The “divine diminution”, for example, exactly corresponds to the “withdrawal” of the Cabbalists, and the conception of the initial perfect Being before the Fall is entirely Parmenidean. The theory which removes all responsibility from man to throw it back on God is one of the oldest and most sustained heresies. Valéry's own contribution consists rather in having brought together all these doctrines, of somewhat diverse origin. In any case, we should not criticise him as philosopher, which would be both to do him too much honour and to insult him, but should consider certain curious *symptoms* in his work.

himself and to judge it according to his mediocre needs or faculties); this means that the metaphysical mainspring of Creation is imagined as vanity or boredom, and that the satanic organ-point which prolongs the Sin is identified with delight in self—all purely psychological motives. Secondly there is the strange subversion of values to which they bear witness, and this seems to be a general feature of Valéry's art; very frequently, and with a perversity which has become almost mechanical, he paints in black all that would normally be painted white, and vice versa: the Sun which appears to give us light really masks things from us and becomes the supreme abettor of illusions; the sensible appearance of an object conceals its essence instead of revealing it. "What I see blinds me, what I hear deafens me," says Monsieur Teste in his *Log-Book*; things have power over us, not because of their presence but because of their absence: "Man has invented the power of absent things, by which he made himself powerful and wretched";¹ we do not exist by that which has actually happened to us, but on the contrary by that which we have not had:

"We ourselves consist in the very refusal or regret of that which is, in a certain distance which separates us and distinguishes us from the moment. Our life is not the sum of the things which happened to us or which we did (for that would be a strange life indeed, enumerable, descriptive, finite) so much as the sum of the things which escaped or deceived us."²

In short it is not Being which comes first, as commonsense naturally believes, but the Void. We are not concerned with evaluating the truth or accuracy of these propositions (which all, certainly, contain partial truth, are valid in one sense at least, and which are even in some cases commonplaces of general or philosophical opinion), but with seeing that they proceed from the same "rhetoric of perversity" behind which (in spite of Valéry's obstinate rejection of all systemisation) can be seen the outline of a general, dualistic and even Manichaeian metaphysical theory, which is not vastly different from that affected at all times by certain types of the intelligentsia. It could be described as "the metaphysic of the indifference of contraries", and be summarised by the famous phrase in which Heraclitus asserts the identity of

¹ *Moralités*, p. 141.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

the two ways, that which leads to the height and that which leads to the depth:

ὁδὸς ἄγω κάτω μία καὶ ὤντη

—also, by the way, the epigraph to the first of the *Four Quartets*, in which Eliot merges end and beginning.

Valéry's perverse rhetoric, which paints light with shadow and makes a "divine absence" out of human consciousness, is not without numerous analogies—we need only mention the "précieux" baroque poets, the last offshoots of the Renaissance, to whom the recent anthology of Thierry Maulnier and Dominique Aury has re-introduced us.¹ When the contemplator of Saint-Amand

" . . . écoute à demi-transporté
Le bruit des ailes du Silence
Qui plane dans l'obscurité "

we are not very far removed from Zeno's arrow "which vibrates, flies and does not fly", or from the "tumulte au silence pareil", or Narcisse, who, with his acute senses, "entend l'herbe des nuits croître dans l'ombre sainte".

The phrase of William Blake, which Gide used so much (and perhaps abused) is well known: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of the angels and God, and at liberty when of devils and hell, is because he was a true poet and of the devil's party, without knowing it." It thus appears that "true" poets are all, to a greater or lesser degree, "*précieux*", if all rhetoric may be so called when it tries to reabsorb the fundamental ambiguity of the universe in expressing it—for example, by means of what is commonly called metaphor, by means of the conceits of the Renaissance poets, the Elizabethans, the *marinistes* or *gongoristes*; even by puns in the manner of Queneau, Joyce or Heraclitus. If, moreover, one sees in the devil first and foremost the Slanderer, who persuades us (wrongly) of the indifference of contraries, of the blackness of white and the sweetness of bitterness, then it is understandable that the poets should be of "the devil's party", even without knowing it and in spite of themselves, almost from professional necessity; that they should, like Jodelle, adore the double, even triple, Hecate who glows in the firmament and

¹ *Poètes baroques et précieux du XVII^e siècle* (Edition Jacques Petit, Angers).

presides in hell. Nor is it strange that they should present to us in their verse a world that is inside out, a "negative" of real existence. The ultimate end of poetry is to offer us the mirage of a world at last reduced to unity, and this by every means, from metaphor to sheer sleight-of-hand, even if we are driven (like Heraclitus) to proclaiming in despair—and apparently in contradiction to all common sense—the identity of contraries, the equivalence of life and death; or, like Paul-Ambroise, to asserting with a heroic effort

"Que l'univers n'est qu'un défaut
Dans la pureté du Non-Être."

No doubt the devil's first trick is to persuade us that he does not exist, but his second, indisputably, is to convince us that nothing at all exists, and that we might therefore just as well believe that the moon is made of green cheese, that black is not so black, nor white so white. . . .

II. THE APORIA OF SATAN

A poet moves in the universe of the Word; whatever human experience he may try to integrate into his verse, the Word will always have the final say and lead him where it likes. Valéry moreover has always defended this thesis, pushing to its limits Mallarmé's theory of the poem made not of ideas but of words. And this is clearly expressed in the conclusion of *La Pythie*, which shows us language itself, that anonymous god "dans la chair égaré", speaking in the most impersonal manner through the mouth of the Sybil:

"Voici parler une Sagesse
Et sonner cette auguste Voix
Qui se connaît quand elle sonne
N'être plus la voix de personne
Tant que des ondes et des bois!"

The art in which Valéry excels is doubtless not indifferent to that logical Manichaeism which in the last analysis is his. It is not very surprising that a metaphysical theory which had arisen from and was commanded by rhetoric should have led him into grave theological difficulties which he was not in the least prepared to

resolve. It may be dangerous to consider "profundity" as a literary effect like any other,¹ and to evoke the evil one (even in a poem) is always unwise for anyone who has not previously purified himself (as did the sorcerers of the Middle Ages) through mortification and prayer, or fortified himself by invoking the assistance of the Holy Trinity for the work he is about to undertake. It is better perhaps not to speak of the devil if one only half believes in him. . . . (In any case, Valéry's punishment seems to have been exactly proportioned to his sin. . . .)

It is to a novelist who (in spite of appearances) is a greater master of his art, and less exposed to the temptations of language and rhetoric, that we must turn if we are to find both the most orthodox and the most convincing satanic theory of the modern period. This novelist is, of course, the author of the *Soleil de Satan*. From this book, his first novel, down to the recent *Monsieur Ouine* (so unjustly disregarded and misunderstood even by orthodox critics), Bernanos builds a structure of Satanic "aspects" of the devil which become progressively more essential, more true, through the gradual elimination of those potentially Manichaean elements identifiable at the outset. It is also significant that these aspects have nowhere been better expressed than in a novel—not, for example, in an abstract and systematic essay: that they are more strikingly realised in the acts and thoughts of the characters than in their speeches, which are frequently enigmatic; and that the novel in which they are most accurately and truly represented should be the novel which appeared, on a first reading, to be the most obscure and disconcerting.

Man can hardly deny that evil exists, as much within himself as without. To laugh at the devil as at an old wives' tale, or, like the rationalists, to consider him a "gratuitous hypothesis" and see in him only a convenient and simplifying name for certain phenomena which could be explained rationally, is in reality to play his own game, to do exactly what he wants, what he expects us to do. "Satan or the gratuitous hypothesis", writes Gide, "that must be his favourite pseudonym." But on the other hand, to regard him as all-powerful is another way of giving in to temptation, and we then run three risks: we can be brought to despair by being made to succumb *in advance* to an almost abstract

¹ "Literary profundity is the fruit of a special process. It is an effect like any other, obtained by a process like any other" (*Rhumbs*).

temptation, like a demoralised army which capitulates without fighting; or we can be made the victims of a fundamental Manichaeism, whose consequences, relatively hidden, but all the more baneful for that reason, we shall see later; or, finally, we can be led to a satanism which is sometimes quite external, like that expressed in certain poems of Baudelaire or in Huysmans' *Là-bas*—though we should not be too quick to scoff here either, for however conventional and melodramatic they may be, the “props” of black masses and litanies said backwards mask profound rebellion, sometimes all the more secret, either because it is abstract (as in Valéry) or because it is unconscious.

Satan is very clearly alluded to (although his name is not pronounced) in the last petition of the Lord's Prayer, upon which the catechism of the Council of Trent comments thus: “Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine tell us that the evil referred to in this petition is specifically the *devil*,” and it stresses that the devil is so called because “without any aggression on our part, he wages a ceaseless war on us and pursues us with mortal hatred”—which explains why we should ask for God's help in defending ourselves against him. This is confirmed by the famous lines from the Epistle of St. Peter: “*Sobrii estote et vigilate, quia adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret.*”

Theology is thus allowed a certain latitude as regards the devil, and takes up a position midway between the Augustinian—which endows evil with as much reality as one can grant it without oneself falling into the Manichaean heresy—and the Thomist, which is more restrained, more subtle and which grants the devil a goodness of essence. A novelist like Graham Greene, whose work is dominated and almost obsessed by the sense of evil, who presents characters that are the visible incarnation of hatred (like Raven in *A Gun for Sale*), or the incarnation of pride (like Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*)—subscribes to an Augustinian theology. Fortunately he is too good a novelist to go as far as Jansenism; by that I mean that he does not in any way *judge* his characters and would never allow himself to pronounce on their damnation or salvation (as Mauriac too frequently does with his), nor on their degree of sanctity. But when we reflect on his heroes, who always retain absolute freedom, however strong their predestination to crime may be (Raven cut off by his harelip from com-

munion with his fellowmen, even in the most commonplace ways; Pinkie hardened in his pride and solitude by his destitute childhood and the sexual complexes it has left in him), we can estimate how dangerous the Augustinian position is, and we can reflect that the Bishop of Ypres was not entirely wrong in calling his book the *Augustinus*. Enough ink has been spilt over the question of whether the five propositions were in fact contained in Jansenius, without the matter's being further complicated by the suggestion that they were already in St. Augustine!

The spiritual and aesthetic advance made by Bernanos between *Sous le Soleil de Satan* and *Monsieur Ouine* can be measured by noting that in the latter book the devil no longer needs to appear in person in order to be present, as he did once when he manifested himself on the other side of a ditch in the form of a slightly drunken Flemish wagoner to the Curé of Lumbres. This is certainly an artistic advance, for the explicit intrusion of the supernatural in a novel is always a little jarring: the relations maintained between Monsieur Ouine and Satan are presented to us indirectly, quite objectively and implicitly, in a manner which preserves all the ambiguity of the situation. It would be as temerarious to identify the old professor of languages with the evil one as to claim on the strength of one or two details (a faded photograph, a similar rhythm of breathing) that he is the long-vanished father of the young Philippe whom he cherishes with a tenderness that is at times decidedly equivocal; or to state with any certainty (in spite of the pointers freely strewn by the author) that he is the author of the crime which unleashes evil on the dead parish of Fenouille. Satan is no more Monsieur Ouine than he is the fantastic mare of Jambe-de-Laine, or Jambe-de-Laine herself, or the mayor, Arsène; indeed why should he not be Philippe's nurse, or Doctor Malépine, or old Devandhomme, or the entire village, where on the day after the cowherd's death, evil hums "like a hive in April"? He is in them all, and still more is he in the gulfs that gape between them, in the absence of communion between them, which translates itself into the psychological terms of their individual solitudes, their mutual lack of understanding; these gulfs are reflected in the structure of the book by the disintegration of the different episodes, their discontinuity, the gaps between them, and the obscurity they retain when considered in isolation, each being jealously closed in upon itself like an enigma,

like a conscience which doggedly refuses to enter into any communication because it knows itself to be inhabited by evil.

It is significant that quite often one of the scenes of *Monsieur Ouine*, though in itself obscure, contains the key to another scene which has occurred some hundred pages before,¹ and that details previously puzzling are clarified when related to the whole—even from the point of view of the plot itself² and, of course, far more as regards the meaning of the novel—as if Bernanos had wanted his scenes to have no sense outside a *communion* and a *reversibility*, analogous and allegorically corresponding to the communion of souls and the reversibility of merits on which the Church is founded. Alain says somewhere that when people do not share our admiration for some work, it is impossible to convince them that they are wrong, but we can often show them that they did not read it aright, if at all. I would add that one can perhaps enlighten them about some unnoticed but distinguished passage by merely drawing their attention to it, and reading it with them, as it were, over their shoulder.

I do not know if enough attention has been paid to that extraordinary scene in which Monsieur Ouine *tempts*—there is no other word—the Curé of Fenouille, under the pretext of wringing from him some bundles of anonymous letters which the other gives him quite willingly and which hardly seem of much use to him. This whole scene is charged with significance, but it is done so discreetly, the priest's words are so hesitant and Monsieur Ouine's so non-committal, that it may easily escape notice.

The only way in which this amateur of souls, this connoisseur, Monsieur Ouine, can have any power over the humble and shy country curate, is by frightening him with the spectacle of evil and the thought of his own solitude, exaggerating the magnitude of sin—in short, by making him believe too strongly in the reality of Satan, so as to reduce him to despair by making out beforehand that his task is impossible.

“‘The misfortune of men,’ he said, ‘Their misfortune. . . I also believed in it once. Alas! Monsieur, pity could no more

¹ e.g. the scene in which Philippe learns from his nurse that (eighty-four pages before) old Anthelme was not delirious on his death-bed when he told him that his, Philippe's, father was not dead, as was believed, but had vanished and lost his memory.

² I have attempted this exegesis in a review entirely devoted to *Monsieur Ouine* (Poésie 47, no. 33). I refer the reader to this, not wishing to overload an argument which is already complex.

be active there than a surgeon in a thick stream of pus. At the first scratch,' (he took the other's hand gently in his) 'at the first scratch on that compassionate hand, I am afraid that all that filth would sicken your heart. . . . Oh! yes, sympathy, compassion, to *suffer* with. . . . To rot with, rather. Besides, you would not be the last'. . . . 'What scratch are you talking about?' asked the Curé of Fenouille. 'For deception——' 'What! there is no question of deception,' Ouine protested dreamily. 'What do you care about being deceived? You will not be deceived, but dissolved, devoured! Good God, how can your masters have taken such care to arm you against pleasure and yet leave you so defenceless against . . . against . . . how stupendously absurd!' 'I fear only sin,' stammered the poor priest. 'Please excuse me, I cannot translate this into profane language.' 'Precisely, precisely, that is just what I mean,' Monsieur Ouine smilingly observed"

It would be difficult to say more delicately, and also more precisely, that the only danger still able to threaten a being as pure as the Curé of Fenouille, as inaccessible through lust as through intellectual pride or curiosity (being too simple at heart), is that which Bernanos in *Sous le Soleil* calls the "Temptation of Despair", a somewhat ambiguous test, known to the Curé of Lumbres after his nocturnal meeting with Satan. The latter's hatred is reserved for the saints. But it can hardly have power over them, except by forcing them into a dialogue (it is Monsieur Ouine who seeks out the curate and who starts a conversation with him), in order to make them grant more reality to Evil than it has. The Curé of Fenouille defends himself by declining to debate in the terms laid down by his opponent. He asserts, stammeringly certainly, but still as a profession of faith, "I fear only sin"—sin and not Satan; that is to say: "I only fear what man is after all able to avoid," and not an external and irresistible opponent. It will be noticed also that, at the end of the scene, the Curé, protected by his innocence, has only to utter a few words which (the last especially) almost amount to an exorcism, for Ouine to rush off suddenly and without apparent reason: "But of course, monsieur, I am on the side of man's wild stupidity. I do not revolt against evil. God did not revolt against

it, monsieur. He assumes it. I do not even curse the devil. . . .” And at the same moment he opens his arms, really in discouragement and despair of making himself understood. Monsieur Ouine has two alternatives; to throw himself into them (and be redeemed) or to disappear. He disappears, to the astonishment of the Curé, who had suspected nothing; but before doing so he first draws one last arrow from his quiver, which also misses its target, but which at least covers his retreat and enables him to retire with dignity and without apparent defeat (unless it were the avowal of his own). “Man’s very lowest disgrace,” he said, “is that evil itself should bore him.” For it will be observed that for Monsieur Ouine as for Edmond Teste¹ the supreme evil, irresistible and found at the end of every experience, is boredom: “While there is no such thing as men’s misfortune, M. l’Abbé, there is boredom. No one has ever shared man’s boredom and yet retained his soul. . . .” But it must be admitted that the word has quite a different flavour in the mouth of Ouine, and in this context, from that which it has in Valéry.

It may be said that all this is an enigma, but only if the kind of attention it requires is not given to it. And if Bernanos has not made his idea more explicit, it is not through any kind of affectation (as it too often is in Valéry), but in order to preserve the indispensable ambiguity without which it would be inaccurate. It would for example be a metaphysical falsification to state brutally that Philippe’s nurse is a Lesbian: the evil which is in her is not that she loves women or that she commits sins of the flesh with them; it would be more exact to say that her sin is that she hates men, having been too much hurt by them; more deeply still, that she is a creature of hatred and selfishness, ready to do anything to defend the self-indulgent world she has created for herself, which is threatened by Philippe’s existence, and so on. . . . In fact, evil, even that of a particular creature, cannot be defined nor enclosed in a formula. Similarly the sin of Monsieur Ouine does not lie in sexual anomaly; nothing happens which can make it certain that he ever practised his vice, with Philippe or with the little cowherd or indeed with anyone; and if he has caused the death of Monsieur Anthelme, it is certainly not by

¹ “To live without objections,” said Monsieur Teste, “is not to live.” See also the bitter passage in the *Log-book*: “Disgusted with being right, with doing what succeeds, with the efficacy of processes, try something else.”

murdering him; the principle of his corruption lies infinitely beyond any precise, particular, describable or nameable actions. The crucial scenes, where objective events take place, are as carefully screened from our knowledge as in Faulkner, with as much legitimacy, and for reasons which are ultimately not so very different. In both authors the events are concealed both *because they are not important in themselves*, and that they may not draw our attention away from the essential. In Faulkner it is while they are still developing, while they are still present, that events have no interest; they do not acquire their full weight, their full significance, until they have become past, are seen and apprehended as past. Bernanos whittles them to nothing because material facts, whether murder or sodomy, are nothing *in themselves*: what counts is what lies behind, the malevolent source from which they come, which a direct account would conceal instead of revealing. It hardly matters that Ouine should make Philippe drunk because he is a corrupter of small boys, and hopes more or less confusedly to have him at his mercy while he sleeps, nor even that he should succeed: the evil lies in the avidity he feels towards childhood and its purity, in that "enormous covetousness" whose very existence is in itself a stain.

So extraordinary is the sureness of touch with which Bernanos presents his characters—a sort of somnambulant infallibility, deriving not so much from studied art as from an almost unconscious sureness of vision, comparable to the admirable firmness with which the Curé of Fenouille repulses the devil's attack without appearing to have noticed it—that one hesitates to comment further: one is tempted to send the reader without further ado to meditate on the novels. I must, however, attempt to expound in a manner rather more abstract than his what his work teaches us of Satan.

On reading *Monsieur Ouine* for the first time, one is struck by the fact that the book is devoted to two themes, the interdependence of which is not at once apparent: the "portrait of Monsieur Ouine" and the theme of the "dead parish". Opposite the castle of Néréis, where the old professor of modern languages reigns as humble master, is the village of Fenouille, from which God seems to have withdrawn completely, and where the Curé alone continues to hold the fort, apparently in vain. In fact the

two themes are one, both metaphysically and literally, and their deep union is indispensable to the novel's economy. Monsieur Ouine, the completely negative being, whom we never see directly but only through the eyes of others or through his own speech, which screens him more effectively than silence, could easily pass without revealing all his harmfulness if Bernanos had not clapped down before him the accursed village where evil bursts out in the most objective manner, as if in answer to the intangible, invisible evil which Ouine carries within him. And the murder of the little cowherd, which is both the starting point of this romanesque intrigue and the signal given to Satan's *epiphaneia* in the world of men, is the link, mystical rather than causal, between the two worlds, the castle and the village, Monsieur Ouine and Fenouille; through him evil as power and pure negation is joined with evil as act. The sight of the village, where everything is displayed to the light of day, reveals Ouine's profound nature for us as no psychological analysis could have revealed it, this last being by definition incapable of seizing *nothingness*.

This secret unity of the book is a unity of mirrored reflection, of symmetry rather than of convergence, Fenouille being like a mirror which throws back the real face of Monsieur Ouine. Bernanos did not succeed in attaining this unity in his previous novels, which offer us on the one hand characters who are the incarnations of evil but who remain, nearly always, caricatures (the unconvincing Antoine de Saint-Marin in *Sous le Soleil de Satan*, the mediocre Pernichon of *L'Imposture*, the psycho-analyst of *La Joie*, even the Abbé Cénabre when seen from without), and on the other hand the devil in person, who comes as an auxiliary, as if the author dimly realised that he had not incarnated him forcefully enough in the creatures he knows to be bad, and that he must have recourse to the supernatural to communicate his vision to the reader with the intensity it had for him. With Monsieur Ouine the two elements are at last merged, and in the novel's eponymous hero we have a concrete, living, real being, who at the same time is Evil itself. The novel is thus wholly carried forward by a unique rhythm, profoundly different from the violent alternations, the sudden breaks and digressions of *Sous le Soleil de Satan*: one stroke of the oar on one side (the prologue, the story of Mouchette), one stroke on the other (the *début* of the Curé of Lumbres); then a new set of oscillations, of the

"temptation of despair" at Mouchette's suicide and at the mysterious quasi-miracle of the end. These are violent currents at the very heart of the work itself, symptoms of a theology which has not yet found its balance and which keeps drawing back on the verge of the Manichaean chasm, rather than of artistic clumsiness. *Monsieur Ouine* is not "skilful" or in conformity with current models any more than *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, *Ulysses* or *The Brothers Karamazov* are skilful or "well constructed"; they are all architecturally unprecedented as well as complex; they cannot be related to pre-existing rules; they carry their artistic law within them.

It could be said that in *Sous le Soleil* Bernanos is tempted very much as the Curé of Fenouille is tempted by Monsieur Ouine, that his temptation passes into the consciousness of his literary character, with all its intrinsic ambiguity (for he does not give in to it), and is reflected in the texture of his book, in the form of the special temptation of artists to bring supernatural elements into their work (to this temptation he does give in, but can hardly be said to succumb to it, and both victory and defeat remain uncertain, the dialogue with Satan having neither succeeded nor failed). He is tempted, because his book arises entirely from a very strong, dangerously strong sense, almost a sudden discovery of the reality of the devil as a person, a being strong enough to hold God temporarily in check. This discovery is analogous to the sudden illumination summarised by one of his characters in these terms:

"For a long time, I did not understand: I could only see lost souls picked up by God as He passed. But there is something between God and man, and not a secondary character. . . . There is . . . there is that obscure being, who is incomparably sublime and obstinate, who can be compared with nothing, except perhaps atrocious irony, cruel laughter. God has put Himself in his hands for a time."

But it is an illumination of this kind which at first throws the Curé of Lumbres (almost physically) into the arms of Satan, in the scene of the colloquy, and then gives him up to that mysterious temptation of despair, from which the Abbé Menou-Segrais fortunately saves him. It is a temptation which is all the more enigmatic because, if we have not noticed the title of this section, placed there like a warning by the author, we may well be mis-

taken as to the behaviour of the Abbé Donissan. His action (the giving up of his soul for the redemption of all others) is precisely that described in a famous phrase attributed to St. Teresa of Avila, and the reader's error, like the hero's, is almost necessary in the region then reached, where "one must climb or be lost", often without knowing which one is doing. Satan has no sun; he is the prince of darkness, and creates a reign of darkness in every place he enters, even in the conscience of saints. The temptation of the Curé of Lumbres is the most acute example of that unwitting, unconscious overthrow of values to which Manichaeism leads, symbolised by the moment when, after the colloquy with the devil, the Abbé Donissan rolls to the bottom of the embankment and cannot tell the top from the bottom. Evil is nothing but by our complicity; to believe in it is already to make it real, to face it is already to go half-way to meet it. Without our co-operation it vanishes like a ghost at cockcrow. So Monsieur Ouine, when death is near, feels himself dissolve and return to the Void: he becomes once again what he is, what he has never ceased to be once that carnal support is withdrawn from him, which, like the sheet used by bodiless ghosts to frighten human beings, conferred on him some semblance of existence. Hence the astonishing posthumous confessions addressed to Philippe, from the bottom of the Void he has just re-entered, and with the help of a voice which has also become an illusion:

"I have done evil in thought, young man, I believed I was thus expressing its essence—yes, I fed my soul with the vapours from its still and it became mad at a moment when I can do nothing more for it, neither good nor evil. . . . Oh! God, I thought I was wielding the file and the graving-tool when I was touching this material with a brush so delicate it would not have brushed the pollen from a flower. . . . There is neither good nor evil in me, no contradiction; justice could not reach me, such is the true sense of the word, lost. Neither absolved nor condemned; yes, lost, strayed, out of all sight. . . . If there was nothing, I would be something, good or bad. It is I who am nothing. . . ."

Ineffectual, vanquished, Monsieur Ouine finds again his true essence, which is that of a non-being: "I am re-entering myself for ever, my child."

Thus the drama told in *Monsieur Ouine* ends at last in something like " $x=0$ ". But only the superficial could conclude that the road followed under the author's guidance was followed in vain. Monsieur Ouine vanished in smoke, but the mystery of evil, of which he was the temporal and temporary incarnation, remains whole and real before us, erected and unveiled by the very obscurity of the novel's romance structure.

It will be noticed that the narrative itself consists of a succession of enigmas, interwoven with one another, with one question slipping into the next, so that it is impossible at any given moment to check the narrative, give an exhaustive list and warn the reader, as Ellery Queen might do, and as it should be possible to do in any well-constructed detective novel; this tends to show, in spite of the tempting ingenuity of the comparison, to what extent Bernanos' book differs from a story by Conan Doyle or Dorothy Sayers. If we like, we can try jotting down a few queries as we read; for instance: is the story told by old Anthelme on his death-bed true? where was Monsieur Ouine on the night of the crime? had he some reason for making Philippe drunk, and if so, what? Did Jambede-Laine really want to kill Philippe? And why? Are the Devandhommes aristocrats? and is the story of the little marquis with the green suit a mistake, a legend, or a conceited invention of old Devandhomme? If the daughter and son-in-law are innocent, why do they commit suicide? Why does the crowd lynch Jambede-Laine, who obviously has nothing to do with the crime? Who is the author, or who are the authors, of the anonymous letters? Why does Monsieur Ouine try to get them back? and so on. . . . Some of these enigmas are partially solved during the story, usually psychologically, even mystically, but never so as to elucidate any of the material details of the plot. In the case of most of them, we lose interest and forget them before they are resolved—if they ever are. And this is the main point in the structure of the story: it is not that each enigma matters much: what does matter is this irresistible current which carries us on from one to another. All these enigmas have to overlap each other like the tiles on a roof, the waves of the sea, the scales of a tortoise, in order to protect an essential mystery which it is impossible to formulate (for that would be to change it into a problem, to use the very just distinction of Gabriel Marcel), and which they can represent only by the flow of their own movement—a mystery

which is certainly not the question, "Who killed the little cow-herd?"—a mystery which we must be made to feel without its being actually propounded to our knowledge or curiosity.

The measure of superiority, even artistic or technical, of *Monsieur Ouine* over the previous novels of Bernanos thus appears in the extreme *respect* with which the fundamental theme of the book is presented to us. *Monsieur Ouine* unites what the other books gave us as divided: the diverse elements of evil—on the one hand characters who were indeed evil, but so caricatured that they never really provoked in us the horror they were meant to provoke; on the other hand, the evil one in person, whose action was not clearly enough integrated into the plot of the story. In Bernanos' last novel, however, the eponymous hero is the true incarnation of evil, yet he is at the same time a concrete, living person like any other—like ourselves. The only creature in the book which could be called supernatural (and this with some reservations) is the fantastic mare with which Jambe-de-Laine roves the countryside; from *Macbeth* onwards, we have seen that animals can be the emissaries of Satan and his chosen instruments.¹ Bernanos can no longer keep an isolated place in his book for the devil, for that would be to grant him a reality which he does not in any way possess; he cannot show us his presence "other than everywhere", that is to say, dispersed throughout the world, encrusted in the very heart of Being without which he would be nothing. The temptation to Manichaeism, in any form whatever, is definitely laid aside, while the note of his book becomes more authentic and more convincing.

III. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE DEVIL—IN LITERATURE

Legend has it that the figure of Monsieur Oui-Non, the apostle of suspension of judgment and of indefinite availability, was inspired by the author of *Nourritures Terrestres* and of *Corydon*. Many concrete details can be brought to bear to confirm the resemblance, from the equivocal attitude of "the old professor of languages" towards the young Philippe, down to the way he has of crushing in the palm of his hand the over-blown flowers he has

¹ On this point see the chapter, "Macbeth and the Metaphysics of Evil", devoted to the fantastic animals in *Macbeth* as manifestations of the other world and its evil powers, in G. WILSON KNIGHT's book, *The Wheel of Fire*.

not picked himself—not to mention a subtle allusion to the father of Edmond Teste, whom the midwife declares to Philippe to have been, he at least, a really superior man!¹

That, certainly, is just an anecdote; but it seems to contain a prophetic apperception on the part of Bernanos which not only reaches far beyond the commonplace quarrels of authors, but also beyond what he intentionally put into his book. Nevertheless Gide, on the rare occasions when he refers to the evil one,² uses words which reveal great familiarity—one is almost tempted to say, prolonged dealings with him. We have already spoken of the intimate colloquy which was originally to have formed the core of the *Faux-Monnayeurs*; during the writing of it, this core was more and more hollowed out, rather like Canadian apples when one has them cooked so that they can be eaten cleanly and without difficulty in polite society. Lafcadio and the devil, 'who were originally meant to be the chief characters of the book,'³ were gradually evicted in favour of Edouard, Bernard, Olivier and the rest; but they are no less present by that very absence, or rather by that expulsion. I have elsewhere attempted to guess the reasons of this ostracism;⁴ there remains the evident familiarity, explicitly, even shamelessly admitted: "The great mistake is to make a romantic figure of the devil. That is why I took so long to recognise him. With me he turned classical, when this was necessary for him to get hold of me, and then too he knew that it would not be easy for me to associate a certain happy equilibrium with evil. . . . By moderation, I thought to master evil; and it was by that very moderation that the evil one was, on the contrary, taking possession of me . . ."

An English proverb says: "Who sups with the devil must take a long spoon"—without which, unless one cheats, one is handicapped right from the start, as David Copperfield was when he raced the waiter at the inn over his pudding. I am not insinuating

¹ "N'empêche que vous trouveriez rien qu'à Montreuil des hommes très supérieurs à celui-ci. M. Valéry, par exemple, l'ancien receveur général. Votre maître et lui étaient jadis camarades."

² At the end of the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs* and in *Numquid et tu?*

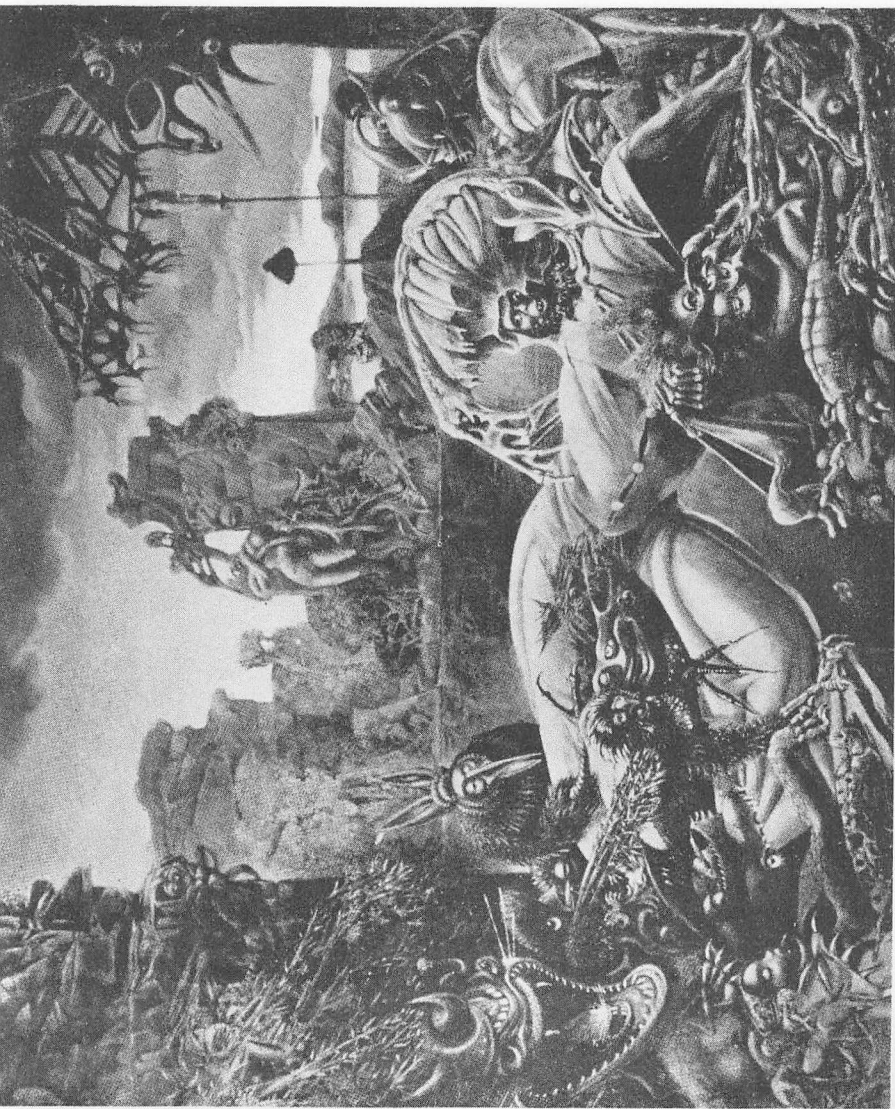
³ *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 39. (Speaking of the characters): "I would like one (the devil) who would move incognito through the whole book and whose reality would be all the more asserted the less he was believed in."

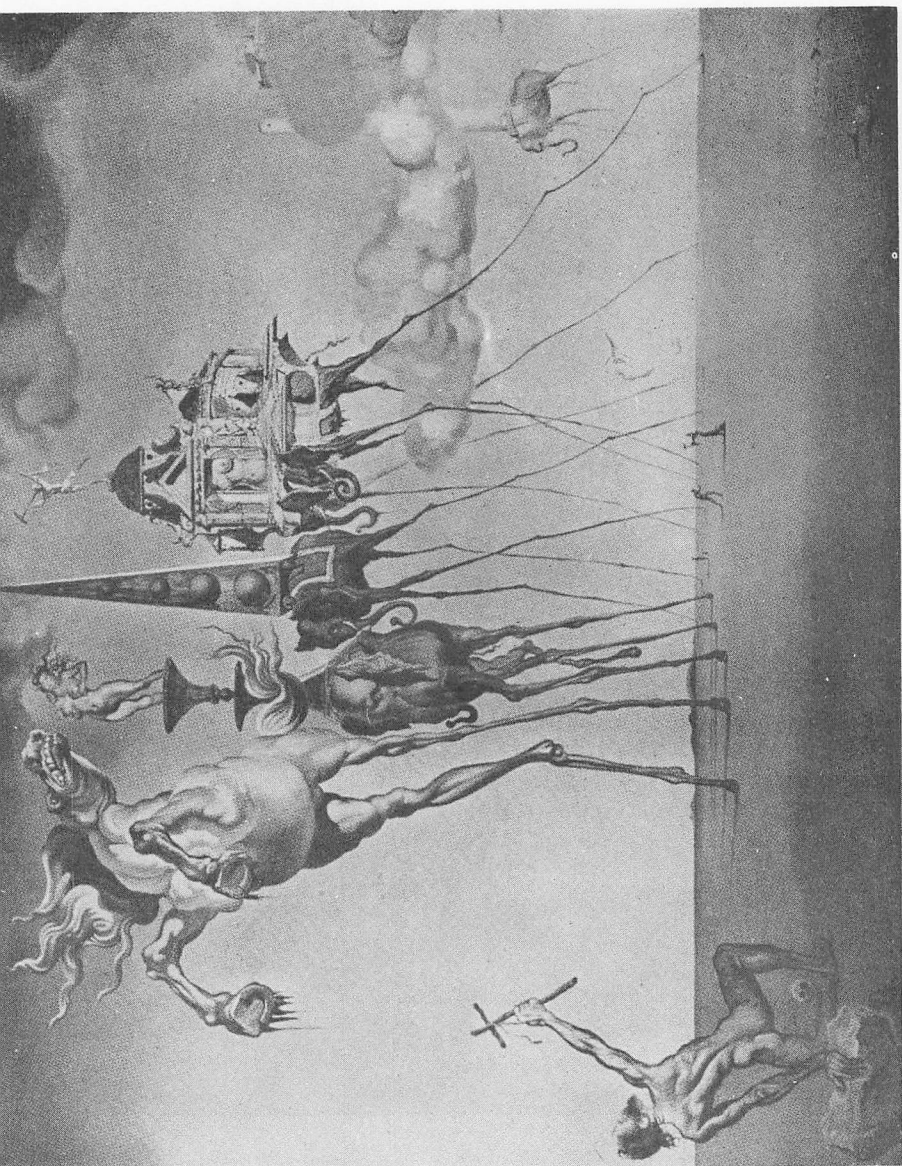
⁴ For the ostracism of the devil, in a study called *L'Éthique Secrète d'André Gide* (*Poésie* 47, no. 36). For that of Lafcadio, in the chapters devoted to the *Faux-Monnayeurs* in *Histoire du Roman Français depuis 1918*, shortly to appear (Editions du Seuil).

that the waiter at the inn (an episodic and insignificant character) is an instrument, much less an incarnation, of Satan! But the moral of the story is that of the proverb: anyone who tries to vie in cunning with him is beaten in advance; "to take a long spoon", or to cheat, is already to compromise with him by borrowing one of his methods, and therefore to yield to him—to grant him the fundamental and general victory one had hoped to steal from him on detail and form. The only salvation, or the only escape, is to refuse all discussion with him, and all combat. André Gide's fault is no doubt that he had not the courage to do this; it is quite certainly the fault of Dostoievski's Ivan Karamazov. The only words which can be safely addressed to the devil are the familiar "Vade retro, Satanas"—or the less famous incantation "Omne spiritus laudat Dominum", which takes no notice of the Adversary and tries to vanquish him solely by refusing to recognise him.

¶ No colloquy with the devil, then—not even in a novel, or through go-betweens. The only way to oppose him is by refusal, with the eyes turned away, and the simplicity of heart of one who goes on obstinately muttering his paternosters, afraid of being seduced if he so much as raises his eyes ("Almost thou persuadest me", as the version of King James puts it); and who reasserts with all his strength the absolute positivity of Being.

This attitude is approximately that of Claudel, who in many of his writings—the *Soulier de Satin* among them—is content to proclaim as loudly as he can that "God is pleased to write straight with crooked lines", that "the worst is not always certain"—meaning that he who wants to damn himself does not necessarily do so, for in this as in all things to will is not necessarily to succeed; or more explicitly through the mouth of the guardian angel of Prouhèze: "Only he who fully sees good can fully understand what is evil. These others do not know what they do"—or through that of the crucified Jesuit, Rodrigue's brother: "It is in fact only evil which requires an effort, since it is against reality". The emblem of this profoundly Catholic work, which is resolved to leave out nothing which has been linked to God by the golden chains of poetry, might be the exorcism quoted above: "Omne spiritus laudet Dominum". So, although the devil can tempt, and although his momentary triumph may be brilliant, he is vanquished *in advance* by the fervour of faith itself and the simplicity of a heart where doubt cannot find a single crack through which to creep.





It is impossible to think of the devil for any length of time, or to imagine him, without thereby involuntarily assenting to him, in accordance with a dialectic which is well described in *The Imitation of Christ*: "Nam primo occurrit menti simplex cogitatio; deinde fortis imaginatio; postea delectatio, et motus pravus, et assensio." Once the mere thought of evil is present in the mind it loses no time in invading the imagination; then the soul, which has taken delight in the thought, makes a movement towards it, and ends by consenting to it. By way of a concrete commentary on this truth, Charles du Bos gives us the terrible passage in *Numquid et Tu*:

"If only I could tell the drama, describe Satan after he has taken possession of a being, using him, working on others through him. It seems a vain image. I myself only understood it a short while ago: one is not only a prisoner: active evil demands an activity turned inside out: one has to fight on the wrong side."

Even with a long spoon, we must not accept the invitation to sup with the devil, for he only wants us to borrow his own weapons. However hostile a dialogue may seem at first, the very fact that it is a dialogue tends to destroy the notion of the Adversary and turn him first into an interlocutor and then into a partner, and the duel into a match; finally he becomes an accomplice, and we ourselves are transformed into our old enemy. We must not want to vie in cunning with Satan.

This is not just a superstitious fear—the fear of someone averting his eyes and furtively crossing himself. Those who have had too strong a desire to look the devil in the face—Dostoievski, Graham Greene, even Proust and Flaubert—have retained an indelible burn, an incurable wound, of which Pinkie's vitriol in *Brighton Rock* may be regarded as the concrete symbol. As Maritain well expressed it: "To write the work of Proust as it deserved to be written, one would have had to have the spiritual illumination of a St. Augustine"; and Flaubert, who had leaned too daringly or with too much gratification over the chasm of Stupidity, felt that he was becoming like his monstrous creations, Bouvard and Pécuchet.

There are good theological, or if you will, metaphysical

reasons for this insurmountable giddiness induced by evil; this insuperable attraction to what nevertheless appears to be nothing. "To think of God is an action," says Joubert, and Charles du Bos repeats the profound saying. "To think of the devil", on the other hand, "is a slope—down which one slips",¹ for it is to think of nothing, to form an idea which offers no resistance to thought, which requires no effort, and is therefore the very reverse of that tension required by true contemplation. And the immediate consequence of that first concession made, though only mentally, to evil, is an unconscious betrayal, a change of sides, because one finds oneself involuntarily—one might say almost automatically—enriching the darkness with the virtues of light, crediting the Void with what belongs to Being alone.

This implicit betrayal is only possible if the devil has already found a secret connivance within the soul. In the case of Gide, complicity arises out of the passive in him, out of what is "indefinitely available" (to use his own term)—in short, what is *negative*. Again and again he notes in his *Journal* (sometimes as a complaint, sometimes as self-congratulation) this dispossession of the self, this lack of internal resistance which continually makes him take the side of his interlocutor, or even of his opponent, and do so at times with considerable passion. Take for example this passage from the *Journal des Faux Monnayeurs*:

"It is certainly easier for me to make a character speak than to express myself in my own name; this is all the more so in proportion as the created character differs from me; I have written nothing better, nor with more ease, than the monologues of Lafcadio, or the diary of Alissa. As I write these, I forget who I am, if indeed I ever knew. I become the other person . . . It is a question of extending abnegation to the point of total self-forgetfulness. . . . So in life, it is the thought, the emotion of others which dwells in me: my heart beats only from sympathy. That is what makes all discussion difficult for me. I at once abandon my point of view. I leave myself, and so, amen."¹

It is obvious that an artist stands to gain many advantages from this attitude, which, if one goes by appearances only, seems

¹ CORRÈS, *Dialogue avec André Gide*, p. 292.

to resemble the virtue of "negative capability" which Keats in his letters calls the artist's supreme gift. (This negative contemplation, however, is obtained at the cost of real asceticism, whereas Gide only follows his natural inclination when he yields to passivity.) Moreover, the danger of this attitude is at once apparent, if we reflect for a moment that the interlocutor or opponent may be the devil, roaming like a hungry lion around that citadel which no one thinks of defending—in which, indeed, there is certainly no defender left. It would seem that each time Gide comes face to face with himself, digging into himself and deepening himself in solitude, he meets only a kind of interior void: that is, if we may regard Edouard's terrible admission in the *Faux-Monnayeurs* as in any way personal: "It is only in solitude that the substratum sometimes appears to me and that I attain a certain fundamental continuity; but then I feel that my life is annihilated, stops, and that I shall entirely cease to be."¹ A momentary stopping of the spiritual pulse, a syncope—such, for him, is the result of what Montaigne calls "recollection". Valéry, with great eloquence, blamed Pascal for hearing only eternal silence instead of the music of the spheres that delighted the ancients; when Gide enters into himself he finds only void; it is a reduction, a diminution of being which is revealed or determined in him by meditation, instead of the superabundance of riches one would expect to find in an inner life thrown wide open to the spiritual universe. We find it easier to understand the impression his work gives of being *dried up* in spite of its objective abundance; it is only the thin and intermittent trickle of the Mediterranean stream, instead of the gushing forth of a spring fed continually by the reversibility of merits. He might have drunk at this stream had he belonged to the community of souls in which man is never alone, but always surrounded and supported by those who pray and meditate at the same time as he.

All this explains why there is on Gide's part a confused tendency to identify the devil with the Platonic or Goethean *daimôn* who presides over artistic creation; a confusion for which, not without sophism, he takes his authority from Blake. It is perhaps true that

¹ pp. 86-7. Cf. the cry of Saul, in the play of that name: "I encourage everything, against myself." Cf. also the phrase in *Si le Grain ne meurt*: "Some evenings, when surrendering to sleep, I really felt I was abdicating myself": and what Du Bos says (op. cit., note i, p. 301) about contemplation, which in Gide is so passive that he could be said to be "a prey to contemplation".

most great human works depict sin rather than virtue; but is this not due to an infirmity in our nature, a spiritual blindness resulting from original sin? If he had had more greatness of soul, Milton might have described Paradise as well as he describes hell; on a more profane level, literature, which now abounds with ill-starred lovers, might give us instead descriptions of fulfilled love; even Balzac, who firmly believed in marriage, seems in spite of himself to have described mostly monsters, even in his own life. The shining example of Fra Angelico is a direct contradiction of the thesis which Gide took over from Blake. Moreover, the monotony of evil is at least equal to that of happiness, and virtue shares with its opposite the sad privilege of not being varied, so that Bernanos was able to implement Baudelaire's phrase about "le spectacle ennuyeux de l'éternel péché".

The arbitrary identification of the diabolical with the demonic is a fresh example of the confusion into which one falls. This fall is always due to negligence, and to allowing oneself to be seduced by paradoxes, of which the fallen angels, such as Wilde, are the great manufacturers; due, too, to one's having imprudently engaged in conversation with the Slanderer, who is skilful at painting over his own and his creatures' blackness with vivid colours. One finishes by going flatly against all reason: when Du Bos, speaking of Gide's contradictions on Dostoievski and the "underground element" in him, says that "it does not follow, because the devil is mostly underground, that everything which is underground belongs to him, or originates from him", he is only denouncing the common error of logic which unwittingly substitutes the converse of a proposition, or at least believes that a proposition implies its converse. And the identification of the underground spirit with the kingdom of Satan is exactly analogous to the romantic assimilation of the Freudians, for whom the fount of spiritual forces drawn on by the artist is confused with the individual sub-conscious, understood in the very basest sense. We all know what misunderstandings these views produce when they are applied to art. It is at any rate certain that the "demon" whose collaboration Gide declares to be indispensable to any work of art is not necessarily identical with the Prince of Darkness: is not the role reserved to him identical with what is called "God's part" in the *Traité du Narcisse*? And what are we to think of such a "flottement dans la terminologie"?

Another example of this overthrow of values to which the "Manichaeans of fact" (in other words, those who engage in colloquy with the devil) expose themselves, is found in the famous passage from *Si le Grain ne meurt*,¹ which shows a "spiritual inversion" far more serious than any restricted to sex alone, where Gide, by his own admission, no longer "decides against the other", so that Du Bos no doubt rightly sees in it the equivalent of a pact with the devil; that is to say something—an *act*—far more serious than any particular sin.

There is in this passage the principle, the admission, of a general overthrow of values, the metaphysical basis of all the dialectics so often found in Gide and still more in Jouhandeau, in which good is presented to us as the supreme temptation, the one which it is most important to resist—an inversion far more dangerous than the facile satanism which consisted in praising the attractive force of evil and in celebrating black masses. "Active evil demands some activity turned inside out; one has to fight on the other side . . ." wrote Gide in *Numquid et Tu*? In other words, one has to become the devil's ally, his servant, and slander as he does. There is an example of his "calumnies" in another passage from *Si le Grain ne meurt*, in which Gide rejoices in the perfect purity of his love for Emmanuelle, while Satan, apparently, is chuckling quietly in a corner:

"Thus, as I said, my love remained almost mystical; and if the devil was deceiving me by making me consider as an insult the idea of mingling with it anything carnal, I was as yet unable to realise it, and I had decided to disassociate pleasure from love; and this divorce even seemed to me desirable, for pleasure was more pure and love more perfect if the heart and the flesh were not mutually involved."

It would be difficult to find a better example of the dialectics of "calumny", which consists in building up weaknesses as virtues, limitations as excellences. Faced with this profound deception, which succeeds in travesty and falsifying even so

¹ "But I then came to doubt whether God Himself demanded such constraints: if it was not perhaps blasphemous to be always jibbing at things; if it was not against Him; if in that struggle which divided me, I ought to give everything reasonably to the other" (iii, p. 50). We are reminded of the Abbé Donissan, who, at the foot of his mound, cannot tell which is the "top" and which the "bottom"—where heaven is, and where Satan's kingdom.

honourable a thing as virtuous love, in turning purity into the supreme imposture, one begins to suspect even what may at first have seemed most authentic in Gide: to ask, for example, if there was not in the attitude of *Numquid et Tu?* some ghastly, blasphemous *inverse incarnation*, some effort to engender a man-God from purely human forms, instead of accepting that God had sent His Son on earth to redeem us.

Examples of inversion arising out of the same dialectics can be found in others besides Gide. What else was the Nazis' elevation of vital values above all others—those vital values which Scheler placed on the lowest rung of his hierarchy of moral values. Moreover, this displacement inevitably leads to the mutilation of these very values, since, as M. Ruyer has shown in a recent essay,¹ their privileged position is due to *one* aspect only—the cruel, destructive and “masculine” aspect, as opposed to the “feminine” values of protection and fertility—so that these values are “slandered” and disfigured as well as being subverted.

In the work of Jouhandeau there are numerous examples of that overthrow of values outlined in *Si le Grain ne meurt*, but in a far more extreme form, so that, in this connection, it is really possible to speak of a “mystique de l'Enfer”.² The “inverse incarnation” of the *Numquid et Tu?* is here replaced by an outright denial of the Incarnation—a denial in which M. André Rousseaux sees a survival of the cathartic spirit so well described by Denis de Rougemont. M. Godeau cannot accept human imperfection: “It is far more extraordinary,” he says, “that we who are imperfect should be, than that God who is perfect should be.” (We may note the way in which the argument of St. Anselm is inverted in this formula.) In the same way, in the *Chroniques Maritales*, Elise's husband undertakes to teach Father K. his own profession, drawing his attention to the fact that “each man belongs both to Christ and to Lucifer”; and ends up by teaching God Himself: “Jesus Christ must renounce His humanity. It is His duty to break from it” (which shows, among other things, just how dangerous it can be to teach someone else his own business).

The Jouhandelian “mystique” of hell culminates in the marriage of M. Godeau with Elise, whose cook has at first said of her

¹ *Deucalion*, No. 1.

² This expression appears in the title of a work which Claude Mauriac has devoted to the author of the *Essai sur moi-même*.

"Madame is a saint" but is soon ready to declare that "Madame is the devil in person", to which Monsieur Godeau adds: "It is nearly the same thing." The explanation he gives for this extraordinary equation recalls the similar trap laid by the devil for Gide in *Si le Grain ne meurt*, and shows the confusion of values inevitably resulting from Manichaeism. "I did not know if I was struggling against good or evil, an angel or a demon, but I was frightened of resisting Grace, in the belief that I was obeying it." The following passage shows, in terms which remind us of the danger Gide was running by his extreme "availability", that it is his very belief in the devil which precipitates him into evil:

"There is one place in us which must not remain empty. If it does, we are at the mercy of the first comer, the devil: and it is certainly better for us to be occupied by a tyrant or a bogey than to be exposed to that licence which is the greatest misery and the very opposite of inner independence. One is less great by what one refuses than by what one welcomes and submits to."

Jouhandeau thus shows us very clearly the dangers to which we expose ourselves by an excessive familiarity with the devil. The long-standing link between satanism and paederasty, which we can trace from Gilles de Rais to "the divine marquis" and Monsieur Godeau, calls no doubt for analysis; but this I leave to others. One cannot help thinking sometimes, with some irreverence, that Jouhandeau's metaphysical attitude is exactly symbolised by the favourite (spatial) position of Barberine, the heroine of one of his most delightful tales: she is the daughter of the pious Madam Pô, and her principal and secret charm is her habit of arranging herself backside uppermost, which she does at the slightest provocation, the habit being so strong that she cannot die in any other position: "... and this was so much her congenital attitude, the attitude which would be eternally hers in hell, that in the very moment of death, during a last attack of fever, in the presence of Monsieur le Curé and all those assembled for the administration of Extreme Unction, at the foot of the porcelain crucifix, she could not be prevented from turning backside up, and only in this position was she able to draw her last breath." One is tempted to add piously: "So end all those who, in much or in little, have covenanted with Satan!"

But a more terrible punishment, though one no less exactly proportioned to the sin, may be in store for them. We can form some idea of it from the great scene in *The Brothers Karamazov*, where Dostoievski shows us Ivan in conversation with the devil. Romano Guardini, in his book *L'Univers Religieux de Dostoievski*,¹ has shown how this extraordinary colloquy was prepared and even *provoked* by Ivan's whole attitude; this is made particularly clear at the beginning of the novel, in the *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, where we see very clearly the same subversion of values which we have already noted in Gide and Jouhandeau. Christ is shown to us as cut off from the world and from the Father who created Him, inviting men to emerge from this universe of suffering and sin instead of taking it upon Himself, as He does in the Gospel. He is in fact made in the image of Ivan himself, having like him revolted against a Father in whom are identified both God and the old Karamazov. The figure of the Grand Inquisitor is likewise ordained by Ivan's inner drama: it is in order to counterbalance his very real inferiority in relation to Fyodor that he complacently projects himself into a person rivaling God and placed beyond good and evil. All this—"the reactions of Ivan to God and the world He created; the will, hidden behind an inferiority complex, to rise to a superhuman amorality, beyond good and evil; his relations with the demonic in Lisa Khoklatov and Smerdyakov"—all this was to culminate in the hallucination scene when Ivan faces the devil in person—unless indeed it is his double, unless *he is himself the devil*. "It is I who am speaking, not you!" he cries.

He is, then, on the horns of a terrible dilemma, a concrete instance of those satanic "Aporia" we have attempted to define in the second part of this essay, the essence of which is that the devil is equally to be feared whether one thinks of him or not, as dangerous whether one believes in him or not. Indeed, either it is the devil in person who stands before Ivan—a thought to make the hair stand on end—and in that case how is Ivan to resist him? Is not his presence the unmistakable sign of Ivan's damnation? Or, on the other hand, he does not exist outside the hero's consciousness, and is merely the incarnation of the diseased part of his soul, "of his thoughts and feelings, but only the vilest and most foolish of them", as his victim says. In this case Ivan is

¹ Editions du Seuil.

even more certainly damned than in the first, since he is the devil in person, the very principle of damnation, more damning than the damned. The whole art of his interlocutor, moreover, consists in maintaining the dilemma as dilemma, and preventing it from ever being resolved, for all certainty is ultimately less torturing than indecision: in all this his aim is no doubt to invite Ivan to suicide, the sin which is manifest and irremediable. "Hesitations, anxiety, the conflict of faith and doubt sometimes cause such suffering to a scrupulous man like you, that it is better for him to hang himself," he says to his victim. "I am leading you between faith and incredulity alternately, not without a purpose. . . ." And only Alyosha, with a simplicity of heart which leaves no room for doubt, has the grace to deliver his brother's soul, by a method similar to that used by the Curé of Fenouille in disarming Monsieur Ouine;—the refusal to take part in the colloquy. Just as before the hallucination scene, he had merely shouted to Ivan that he was not his father's murderer—in other words, that none of the questions tormenting him is valid, and that he is in no sense the titanic Grand Inquisitor who tries to wrench the world from the hands of God—so this time he comes and announces that Smerdyakov has hanged himself, has in some sort taken upon himself the sin which Ivan dared not commit, and thus rid him of the corrupt and satanic part of himself.

Fortunately for himself, Gide certainly has not gone so far as this, at least in his published works. He has undoubtedly acted prudently, with that "Norman" and almost excessive prudence of his which, for example, makes him forestall all possible reproaches,¹ in "showing the devil the door", as it were, in his novel, in relegating him to that obscure annexe called the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*. Art, with him, plays the part of a safety-device, a tether which he wears voluntarily to prevent himself from rushing into over-dangerous spiritual adventures, or at least to limit the risk of those adventures which he cannot, after all, resist. His plasticity, his "multiformity", form, as we have seen, the weak spot by which he lays himself open to Satan; but, as

¹ Thus he forestalls any possible objections to *Caves du Vatican* by calling them "soties", similarly with *L'Immoraliste*, *La Symphonie Pastorale*, etc., by calling them "récits", by presenting *Si le Grain ne meurt* not as an autobiography but as simple *Mémoires*, by inserting a refutation of most of the eventual criticisms in the heart of the *Faux-Monnayeurs*. There is something almost too cunning in him: and is not cunning one of the traditional attributes of the devil?

Du Bos notes, he was able to react against this by relegating to his work the task of maintaining the unity of his being. "Everything takes place as if art alone assured to the individual his identity, and as if Gide himself wished, even willed, that it should be so, as if it were repugnant to him to derive the feeling of his own identity from anything other than his own art. . . . The usual notions are reversed . . . here, the constant always derives from the artist: the inconstant—if I may use the word—always derives from the man." Thus Gide was right when he wrote: "The aesthetic point of view is the only one to take in order to speak of my work sanely." Perhaps in the last analysis his artistic conscience will be found to have saved his soul.

Nevertheless his work acquires exemplary value by the manner in which it first greeted and then eluded temptation. In one of its aspects, and that not the least important, literature is a holocaust: it acts in the reader as a purge, not only of passions, but of every kind of danger that can attack the soul. It is as if the writer made in his own person a certain sacrifice which those capable of understanding it are thereby spared from making: as if he were the drunken helot the sight of whom prevents us from falling: or—to avoid the Pharaicism of the last comparison, and its moralising strain, when it is really the *sacral* character of the literary work which is in question—as if he were the scapegoat who takes on himself the weight of sins which we are thereby dispensed from committing. Du Bos rightly concluded his "dialogue with André Gide" by reminding us of the correlative necessity for us to bear our part of his burden instead of judging him—even to take on ourselves the blasphemous element in his thought, as a sin which might very well be lying heavy on our own souls.

One piece of advice, however, may be derived from those colloquies with the devil which he is so skilful at interrupting at exactly the right moment (protected, no doubt, by that resilience of his which he himself calls his "buoyancy"): the same advice which is given to little girls when they are allowed to go alone to town: beware of strangers who speak to you, however nice they look, even if their first words are just a harmless query about which road to take; refuse firmly to have any conversation with them. The first sentence which Gide puts into the mouth of the devil is a question, which more or less forces an answer; *La Jeune Parque* also begins with a question; and we all know how

much of the interrogatory there is throughout the whole of Valéry's poetry. In every period, the libertines and freethinkers who put everything in the form of questions have been held to be the sure and manifest accomplices of Satan, and Gide observes that "the greatest temptations presented to us by the devil are, according to Dostoievski, intellectual temptations, questions".¹ Similarly when writing of *Macbeth*, the play of Shakespeare most haunted by evil, G. Wilson Knight tells us: "There is certainly no play of Shakespeare's in which questions are so frequently asked." In short, if I had to draw the devil, I would give him the shape of a question mark.

By contrast we can understand the necessity of the massive and weighty assertions in Claudel: it is as if he were filling in all the chinks which interrogation had opened in the wall of certainty, by stuffing them with everything positive he could find, and thus preventing the Void from entering; or as if he were silencing the Adversary by erecting over him an absolutely *complete* structure, a monument of Being without a single crack. In spite of the admonitions of Denis de Rougemont, the best way of resisting the devil is perhaps, if not *not* to think of him, at least not to seem too much as if one is thinking of him, while remaining secretly on the watch. Finally we may rejoice that Gide did not give him a greater and more explicit role in his work, which would almost inevitably have led him to the jeering and Manichaean blasphemy of the Boy in *Brighton Rock*: "Credo in unum Satanum. . . ." Baudelaire, for instance, did not entirely escape this danger: from the moment he uttered the famous and revealing words: "In every man, at every hour, there are two simultaneous postulations, the one towards God, the other towards Satan", his whole satanism was already enthroned in power—that satanism the most authentic yet most abstract form of which is the giddiness of the pit, the invincible magnetism of that which is *not*, the "fascination" (in the strictest sense of the word) which the Void had for him. It is not surprising that in his portraits he should look so like a bad priest.

But faith alone, cut off from the other two virtues, is not enough to protect the soul from the devil. Pinkie, the Boy, sins almost by excess of faith; not only does he believe in God "as the devils believe in Him", according to the Epistle of St. James—that is to

¹ Dostoievsky, p. 230.

say, only out of fear of His Power, and without love—but the excess of his conviction embraces Satan also, and gives him a surplus of reality which rightly belongs only to God. It is as if the hypertrophy of one of the theological virtues led to the complete atrophy of both the others, especially the third, and, through pride and hardening of the heart, flung the boy into despair. Another example of the same dialectic can be seen in Graham Greene's more recent novel, *The Heart of the Matter*: here the hero is lost through an excess of charity unaccompanied by hope. The Curé of Fenouille can with some reason speak of the corrosive nature of hope in a world that faith and charity have abandoned and which hope can therefore only serve to destroy, not to redeem: somewhat in the manner of an injection which a sick man is now too weak to endure although, a few days earlier, it might have saved him. In Dostoievski, the purity of Alyosha and the somewhat ambiguous innocence of Myshkin are perhaps not without their effect in aggravating the evil in the consciousness of some of the other characters, such as Ivan or Rogozhin. The sanctity of the Curé of Lumbres reacts like an unbearable burn on the soul of Mouchette and drives her to suicide; in the same way, the graces showered on la Chantal in *La Joie* are paid for by the avidity of Cénabre and the moral aberration of Féodor, the Russian chauffeur. In fact, we here emerge from the kingdom of Satan to enter another mystery: that of the communion of saints and the communion of sinners, in another sphere of the spiritual life where there are certain aberrations and misdirected actions, which perhaps escape the jurisdiction of the Prince of Darkness; for, as the Curé of Fenouille says: "The harvest of man remains a mysterious act, of which perhaps the devil does not hold the whole secret."

After this too summary analysis of Satan's varied appearances in contemporary literature, one feels not only the desire, but the need, to assess in it the innumerable manifestations of Grace.

CLAUDE-EDMONDE MAGNY

PART V

DEICIDE

THE "DEATH OF GOD"

" . . . Where is God? he was shouting. I'll tell you! We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers! But how did we do this?"

Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, §. 125

THE SYMPTOMS of the spiritual crises which shake the world to-day have been diagnosed for a long time past. By 1703-4 at the latest, Leibniz thought them threatening enough to make a European revolution inevitable. The philosopher who, among the moderns, paid the most attention to the doctrines of his predecessors¹ also saw the furthest into the future. It was at first thought that what he had foreseen was the French Revolution. But this was to speak merely of what one had seen for oneself: it was to mistake a stage for the end. It is now known that his foresight went further, and that his anxieties have materialised only in our day.

The germ of the crisis lies, according to Leibniz, in the ideas which influence customs and religion and thus determine the daily behaviour of men. When true they are beneficial; when false they are omens of disaster. Among these true ideas he particularly includes that of the "providence of a perfectly wise, good and just God" and that of "the immortality of souls". He concedes that there are some men so naturally excellent that their lives remain noble and exempt from vice even when their ideas are erroneous. This is especially the case when their errors are the result of speculation and are, as one might say, disinterested. Yet, once alive, error does not rest with its author: it grows continually. Usually it becomes more malignant among the disciples and imitators who slacken the reins which their masters still firmly control. For there are men less good by nature who go astray as soon as they have lost the fear of God and of the distant consequences of their

¹ Cf. E. BOUTROUX, *Introduction à la Monadologie de Leibniz* (Paris), Delagrave, p. 28.

actions. There are some with brutal passions and a hard, ambitious nature, whom nothing would stop should their pleasure or advantage command them to "set the four corners of the very earth on fire". But the world's situation becomes yet worse when false ideas pass from the thinkers to the men of action, to "the men who rule others and get things done", when false theories slip into "the books everyone is reading". Then everything will contribute to the ripening of "the general revolution threatening Europe".¹

Yet all his knowledge of the psychological and sociological conditions proper to the life of the mind did not prevent the prophet of the European cataclysm from becoming one of its chief engineers, and precisely in that realm where he had devoted himself wholeheartedly to building barriers against it.

I. THE SECULARISATION OF CHRISTIANITY

Leibniz marks a neuralgic stage in the history of German thought. Since Luther there had been no one of his stature. He summed up the past and laid the foundations of what was to come. As a religious thinker, he suffered at the depth of his being from the new schism, and tried, as no one had tried before and no one has tried since, to unite what had separated Christians and the nations, and, above all, faith and reason; for it is in the spirit, and more especially on the confines of metaphysics and religion, that everything is really decided. Convinced that no religion could equal Christianity; praying to the Triune God, seeking—he, the Lutheran German—to win Bossuet to the oecumenical cause, working always, in metaphysics, in science, in diplomacy, for the glory of God and the salvation of his soul—nevertheless he died alone, almost forgotten. After his death, thought developed against his own intentions, yet following the track which he himself had traced. He wanted to justify Christianity; in fact, he undermined it. That most penetrating and universal intelligence worked to demonstrate the rational nature of the Christian mysteries. One century of German thought—and what a century!—accepts the principle, and there remains nothing but a reasonable Christianity. Leibniz took away from it what is essential

¹ LEIBNIZ, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. iv, ch. 16.

to it, the "stumbling-block", the *skandalon* of which the apostle speaks. Rationalising, humanising, naturalising, he profaned revelation and its mysteries; he effaced them. He had his precursors, but the new epoch starts with him, the period of the secularisation of Christianity in Germany.

At first, Leibniz was absolutely opposed to the total separation of religion and philosophy as effected by the Renaissance, Humanism and the Cartesians. He drew them together, but in so doing he let reason absorb faith. Christianity as he understood it is no longer a faith, but a religious idealism, a metaphysical system controlled solely by reason. He sometimes remembered that all "obscurity" could not be removed from the mysteries, and that they could not be "proved by natural reasoning";¹ nevertheless he remained haunted by "the ambition to subject everything to logic".² He based faith upon "an act of understanding";³ he declared reason a "light sufficient to guide us in our ordinary actions and to lead us to the knowledge of God and the practice of the virtues", and finally "the principle of a universal and perfect religion which could justly be called the Law of Nature".⁴

In confining oneself only to the logical, discursive, rationalistic aspect of Leibniz' thought one runs the risk, it is true, of misinterpreting it;⁵ his exaltation of the reasoning faculty cannot, however, be overstressed. It is by reason alone "that the revealed voice of God must justify itself".⁶ Reason widens its scope. It is ready to triumph over all obstacles, both in religion and in metaphysics, just as it triumphed over more than one riddle of physics and mathematics in the seventeenth century. It assumes semi-divine proportions; through it man can compare himself with God. The human soul is "like a little divinity in its own sphere".⁷ It "imitates on its own level and in its little world, where it is allowed to practise, what God does in the big world".⁸

¹ LEIBNIZ, *Letter to Basnage*, F. G. Feder (Hanover, 1805), p. 109.

² JEAN BARUZI, *Leibniz et l'Organisation Religieuse de la Terre* (Paris, 1907), p. 498.

³ CHR. VON ROMMEL, *Leibniz und der Landgraf Ernst von Hessen* (Rheinfels, Frankfurt, 1847), p. 277.

⁴ Leibniz, unpub., quoted by Baruzi, p. 487.

⁵ Cf. BARUZI, op. cit., p. 496, and H. HEIMSOETH, *Leibniz Weltanschauung als Ursprung seiner Gedankenwelt*, Kantstudien (Berlin, 1917), p. 376.

⁶ LEIBNIZ, *Letter to Morell*, 29th September 1698.

⁷ LEIBNIZ, *Monadologie* (1714), § 83.

⁸ LEIBNIZ, *Principles of Nature and of Grace* (1714), § 14.

For, as Emile Boutroux sums up: "One and the same understanding, one and the same essence, constitute, according to Leibniz, the being of God and the being of creatures: the difference lies only in the degree of development."¹

That which Leibniz, the sage of a gentlemanly civilisation, had expressed in a few tracts, a few monographs, a few letters, was, in the hands of others, to be spread, systematised, academified, rendered commonplace and lifeless in all the universities and literary reviews; this was the philosophy of enlightenment in Germany, the *Aufklärung*, to give it its proper name. It was as rationalistic in Germany as in the neighbouring countries, but with one important difference. It had, according to Kant himself, "its central point in the things of religion".² It aligned itself, as Hegel emphasised, "on the side of theology" and not, as for instance in France, "against the Church".³ None of the representative thinkers of the German eighteenth century dreamt of how to "écraser l'infâme". It was not a question of repelling but of encircling: not one of obliteration but of occupation. Leibniz' work was continued in the rationalisation of the mysterious; the reduction of religion to the natural law. No hostile sentiment towards God or religion animated these thinkers: they were neither anti-religious nor a-religious. They believed themselves to be at the heart of Christian religion, yet they also believed that at the period in which they lived, man had come of age, and should henceforth "rely entirely upon his own reason".⁴ In Leibniz, however, reason was serving a truly religious nature, which burned to participate in God through love; in Christian Wolff, for example (1679-1754), there was nothing of this mystical ardour, nothing of the Horatian *mens diviniore*. Where Leibniz regretfully admitted that he could go no further, Wolff stated baldly: "It is enough for religious revelation that reason should assert nothing contrary to it."⁵ This was a large stride beyond Leibniz. It was no longer a question of penetrating revealed truths with reason, but one of measuring them with reason, of seeing if divine Revelation respects the rules of nature, and if—the *Praeceptor Germaniae* becomes pedantic—it observes the rules of

¹ E. BOUTROUX, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

² KANT, *Was ist Aufklärung?* (1784).

³ HEGEL, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, ed. Meiner (Leipzig).

⁴ KANT, *op. cit.*

⁵ WOLFF, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott*, §381.

rhetoric.¹ The religious idealism of Leibniz is gone, and only a natural, rationalistic theology remained.

In the university chairs, in tracts, in books and reviews, the theologians, historians, philosophers, men of letters and vulgarisers took up the ideas thrown out by Leibniz and translated by Wolff into specifically German terms. The point of departure was no longer the Bible, but reason. Latin was abandoned as an instrument of thought and replaced by German. In 1687, a university course was announced in German for the first time, in Leipzig, the town of Leibniz. Intellectual Germany crossed the *Limes* and moved eastwards. The youth of central, eastern and northern Germany got the ear of the republic of letters and obtained a majority for more than a century. Leibniz had succeeded Master Eckhart (1270-1328?), Martin Luther (1483-1546), Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) and Angelus Silesius (1624-77); but after him there rose a constellation such as had never been seen in Germany, clustering in from her non-Romanised areas—a new world for a new thought. Wolff was among them, and so were Klopstock (1724-1823), Lessing (1729-81), Kant (1724-1804), Hamann (1730-88), Herder (1744-1803), Fichte (1762-1814) and Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the Humboldt brothers, Wilhelm (1767-1835) and Alexander (1769-1859), the Schlegel brothers, Augustus-Wilhelm (1767-1845) and Frederick (1772-1829), Novalis (1772-1802), Tieck (1773-1853), Jean Paul Richter (1788-1857), Achim von Arnim (1781-1831), Eichendorff (1788-1857) and Schopenhauer (1788-1860). The greatest from the west and south left to join them in Jena, in Weimar, in Leipzig and Berlin—Goethe (1749-1832), Schiller (1759-1805), Hegel (1770-1831), Schelling (1775-1854), and, for a time, Hoelderlin (1770-1843) and Clement (1778-1842) and Bettina Brentano (1785-1859). Curiously enough, most of them were Protestants, many were ex-pastors or the sons of pastors; very few were Catholic converts, fewer still born Catholics, and these last only appear with Romanticism. "Ecclesia depopulata", one might say, counting the great minds of eighteenth-century Germany. Except for Schleiermacher, there was not one theologian of distinction; there was no great theological controversy led by theologians. Germany had become a country of philosophers and

¹ Cf. HETTNER, *Geschichte des Deutschen Literatur im 18 Jhdt.* (1928), ed. G. Witkouski, i, p. 136.

poets. For gradually the world of letters had been conquered by the *Aufklärung*. A faith-absorbing Reason eliminated the mysteries one after the other, and first and foremost that which the man of faith had considered to be the most extraordinary of miracles—Revelation and the Bible.

Leibniz himself had already come to his own conclusions about the Bible, which seemed to him but a fragile foundation for religion. Where would religion be found again if the book came to be lost? "If religion depended on books, the book once lost, religion would be lost also if it were not founded on reason. But where it is founded on reason it could never utterly perish, and although it could become corrupted, there would always be some means of revivifying it."¹ Thus Reason scores a further point. It is a better and more permanent basis for religion than Scripture. Wolff, in his turn, is to deprive Revelation of another privilege, that of teaching the distinction between good and evil. Reason is enough. It is reason which shows us, before the Bible, "what we must do and what omit".² Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) is to go further still. A philologist and orientalist from Hamburg, he applied the principles of sufficient reason and of contradiction to the interpretation of the sacred texts, an audacious approach for his day. It being the essence of religion to be good and wise, the depositaries of the divine message should be good and wise also. But look at the characters of the Old Testament! They provoke the indignation of any man who loves honesty and virtue. The Old Testament thus cannot be divine; it is a human history, a book of the Jews. And the New Testament? The Gospels' call to conversion has indeed a high moral value. But the kingdom promised to the converted is only the terrestrial kingdom of the Jews. And thus it becomes quite clear for Reimarus that the whole of Christianity rests upon false precepts. Other religious ideas dissolve in his syllogisms. What a strange God this is! He sees the dangers of sin threatening man and does not avert them! And original sin—the sin of one imputed to all the others?—nonsense! And Redemption—the merit of One attributed to others?—just as nonsensical!

Yet—and it is characteristic of this century—this criticism, written between 1744 and 1768, never really saw the light of day.

¹ LEIBNIZ, unpub., quoted by Baruzi, p. 487.

² WOLFF, op. cit.

The author was wary of making it public, judging that "one need not spread one's ideas as the apostles did, with vehemence and against the decrees of authority", that it is better to keep such thoughts secret, "until it pleases God to open a path for the religion of reason, a path to inviolate public liberty".¹ Lessing was also respectful towards his reader, for a wise man "cannot say that which is better unsaid",² yet he, too, believed the time had come to examine Revelation: he published a few extracts from the *Apologia* of Reimarus, from then on known as the "Wolfenbüttel fragments". It was not until a century later that a kindred spirit again took up the thought of Reimarus in a work entitled *H. S. Reimarus and his Apology for Reasonable Worshippers of God*.³ It was written in 1862 and the author was David Friedrich Strauss.

Lessing was not content to edit: he had something more personal to contribute. To him, also, the morals of Scripture seemed crude, and its scientific notions in contradiction to ours. His whole being shuddered; he could not bridge the gap between reason and history. "That is the wide and horrible gulf which I cannot bridge, in spite of numerous and earnest efforts. Is there anyone who can help me? May he do so, then; I ask it of his charity. God will give him the reward he will have deserved from me."⁴ But since help was not forthcoming, it was a conscientious duty to strike a blow at the divinity of Revelation. A Hegelian before Hegel, he abolished Revelation, and at the same time preserved it. Revealed truth is divine, but only for a time—thus the revelation of Moses for the Jews, that of Christ for the second age, which greatly advanced the cause of humanity and reason. A third age opens in which "the transformation of revealed truths into truths of reason are ultimately necessary, to serve the interests of humanity".⁵ Leibniz is far away indeed. It is no longer admitted that speculations can be a source of evil, for everything serves progress and truth, evil and error included. "Or shall mankind never reach these ultimate degrees of light and purity? Never attain them? Never? God of goodness, preserve me from such blasphemy!"⁶

¹ Quoted by H. HETTNER, op. cit., i.

² LESSING, *Ernst und Falk, Gespräche für Freimaurer*.

³ DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS, *H. S. Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (1862).

⁴ LESSING, *Ueber den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft*.

⁵ LESSING, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, § 76.

⁶ LESSING, *ibid.*, §§ 81–82.

Faith and reason melted down into one: Revelation absorbed into history, an event among others: such, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was the schedule of the adjustment of Christianity to Reason. We are only concerned here with the trend running directly from Leibniz to Lessing, and Christianity emerges from it already entirely changed, imbued with relativism. This is even more the case in the *Aufklärung* of the vulgarisers.

From 1781, especially, Kant tried to react against the philosophy of his century—against the insolent confidence of reason in its speculations and in an unceasing progress: against the optimistic humanism which overlooks the evil in this world. He wanted to reinstall faith and for this purpose “annihilate knowledge”.¹ He insisted that man has an innate inclination to evil. But this most critical of philosophers could not make himself understood by the age of reason. He came too late and from too far away. The first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was hardly noticed. “Religion within the limits of simple reason” made enemies in the camp of enlightenment without really making friends in the Churches. True, his treatment of evil brought him nearer to the believers; and again, his exposition of other Christian concepts seemed a weapon against the new “lights”. Revelation recovered its importance, the relationship between religion and reason became better balanced, as did that between Christianity and ethics, between the inclination to evil and the seed of goodness in man. But Kant cannot stop the movement of secularisation, for he, too, is a child of his time. He minimises the historical role of Christianity, avoids any clear position with regard to the divinity of Christ, bases faith on reason and religion on ethics.

Heine's summary judgment² does not do justice to the Königsberg philosopher; it makes of him a rebel, which he is not, in spite of the Copernican revolution. Nevertheless Kant was among those whose work helped to create the epoch which ended with Heine's exclaiming: “Do you not hear the bell? On your knees! . . . The last sacraments are being brought to a dying God.”³

¹ KANT: “Ich musste das Wissen aufheben, um zum Glauben Platz zu bekommen.” Preface to the 2nd ed. of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787).

² HEINE, “L'Allemagne depuis Luther”, *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15th November 1834), p. 408.

³ HEINE, *ibid.*

In recalling the reality of evil (history has shown more than once that reason is generally too short-sighted to see it¹), Kant's religious philosophy had aroused the opposition of a group which, round about 1770, immortalised itself by its violent reaction against the narrowness of reason, against irksome rules, against a smug well-being and the automatic progress of a world indolent in its thought and tired of heart. An opponent of the vulgar *Aufklärung*, that of text-books and magazines, this group was by no means equally hostile to the true *Aufklärung*, that of Leibniz, of Lessing and of Spinoza. Why, then, this hostility towards Kant who himself invoked its name? The answer lay in his conception of man. In Leibniz and Lessing there is already observable beneath the criticism of Christianity the fermentation of a new humanism—to be precise, the birth of the superman. Frederick Jacobi tells us how Lessing said to him one day, half smiling, that "he himself was perhaps the Supreme Being, at the moment at the extremity of contraction".² The "perhaps" disappears more and more wholly in the younger generation, giving way to a new conception of man. Titanism, the cult of genius in Herder, Goethe and Schiller, bear witness to it. The outlaw is preferred to the young man of breeding; dangerous living to desiccated theory; vitality, audacity and elemental strength to prudence. Man's spiritual frame strains to the indrawn breath; a new man is born whose parents are Reason and the Life Force. He rejoices in nature and in the mere act of living; he feels in the blade of grass growing by the wayside the creative breath which animates the universe. His hymn to joy embraces the whole world, and the response he receives transports him to the Elysian fields. "Pantheistic eroticism," wrote F. Gundolf.³ The phrase is discerning, but we cannot give unqualified assent to the expression: "pagan sense of the world". Never did a pre-Christian pagan experience the cosmos in this way. Only the post-Christian pagan is susceptible to it, for he has been fed by eighteen centuries of Christian mysticism, so that he always feels himself a child of God, a son and not a slave; he feels within himself the divinity of the Gospel; he feels it so strongly and so spontaneously that the Father is forgotten, and the infinite appears to him only as the

¹ Cf. R. GUARDINI, *Der Herr*, Würzburg (1940), p. 139.

² Quoted by LEISEGANG, *H. Lessings Weltanschauung* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 175.

³ F. GUNDOLF, *Goethe* (Berlin, 1930), 13th ed., p. 119.

extension of the splendid finite, eternity as the intensification of the instant, the transcendent as the truly immanent. Body, heart, earth, everything in this world is divine. All which lives in the cosmos is divine; divine also is man who participates in all, enjoys all, a self-sufficient being whom this superabundance of external and internal wealth can suffice because he projects into it his soul and his mind. Never was man so sure of himself, so conscious of being his own master. Borrowing the titles of the Greeks—for antiquity offers him a mode of expression appropriate to his experience—he addresses his Creator as Prometheus addressed Zeus:

“ . . . I know nothing more wretched
under the sun than you, the gods . . .
Who indeed saved me
from the Titans’ boldness?
Who saved me from death,
from slavery?
Was it not you who accomplished all, in your own right,
heart burning with a sacred flame . . . !¹

This new man has overthrown the barriers separating our world from the world beyond. He can say with Lessing that each man has his hell in his heaven and his heaven in his hell.² He attributes to himself all that is princely in Satan, all that there is of depth and luminosity; there remains Mephisto, that exasperating encumbrance, the symbol of the too human element which hangs at our heels for the pleasure of harming us, of seeing us stumble in the very leap which carries us above ourselves. This man could not but protest against the “rehabilitation” of evil attempted by Kant. And so Weimar protested. Even Schiller, the Kantian, was not satisfied. “A philosophical diabolade,” said Herder of Kant’s treatise, which he called a “novel”. And Goethe, from the camp at Marienbronn, wrote to Herder and his wife:

“Kant, having spent a long life in scrubbing many degrading prejudices from his philosophic mantle, has now ignominiously

¹ GOETHE, *Prometheus*.

² Quoted by LEISEGANG, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

fouled it with the smear of fundamental evil so that the Christians also should be appeased and come to kiss its hem."¹

German classicism—that is to say the best and greatest authors of the *Sturm und Drang*—achieves a synthesis between Christianity as it was understood in the eighteenth century, and the Greek world. *Iphigenia* owes to this alliance features more Christian than Greek. Yet on the whole there was no question of once more assimilating antiquity to Christian truths. What German classicism sought was rather a "humanist" expression for its new vision of man and the word. Both the Gospel and antiquity furnished means of succeeding in this attempt, but the new man is no longer capable of making distinctions of value. The educated world of Germany was thus offered a religious syncretism, created for men with a culture but no faith. And after philosophy, literature, too, emancipated itself from Christianity.

We cannot here follow up the same process in other German minds of the same period, however interesting and symptomatic they may seem to us; not in Hölderlin, who would require a lengthy analysis, not in Wilhelm von Humboldt, who would seem to be the most deeply paganised of them all, nor in Fichte and Schleiermacher, nor in Romanticism itself. We must pass on to the next stage.

II. THE LIQUIDATION OF CHRISTIANITY

All the mysteries of the Christian faith were sounded by the "aggressive reason"² of the eighteenth century and, as we have seen, emerged disfigured and desecrated. Only one moment of Christ's life seemed proof against all explaining-away, all comparison, on account of its fearful uniqueness, a uniqueness literally incomparable. Hegel took it in his stride. He integrated Calvary, the death of God Incarnate, in his dialectic. The historical Good Friday became a "Good Friday of speculation".

From this moment dates, not the actual phrase, but certainly

¹ 7 June, 1793: "... Dagegen hat aber auch Kant seinen philosophischen Mantel, nachdem er ein langes Menschenleben gebraucht hat, ihn vor mancherlei sudelhaften Vorurteilen zu reinigen, freventlich mit dem Schandfleck des radicalen Bösen beschlabbert, damit doch auch Christen herbeigelockt werden, den Saum zu küssen."

² P. HAZARD, *La Crise de la conscience européenne 1680-1715* (Paris), p. 121.

the concept, of the death of God. The birth of such an idea demanded a Christianity reduced to the merely reasonable, and at the same time men who were both metaphysically and religiously minded.

Hegel gave the new concept to the world in his treatise, *Knowledge and Faith*, which appeared for the first time in 1802. A new era had begun; the religion of the time rested on this conviction: "God Himself is dead". The conviction is itself the "infinite pain" of "the absence of God". It is hard to experience it and admit to it, but this "cruelty" is necessary, for "absolute suffering or the Good Friday of the speculative mind"¹ is the condition of resurrection. The whole being is now engulfed "in the death of God, the chasm of the void", but only to rise again from it to the "supreme totality".

The genesis of the Hegelian idea is simple. The expression itself Hegel found in a Protestant popular hymn: a thought from Pascal—"Nature is such that everywhere it marks a lost God both within man and outside him"²—gave him the material for his interpretation.³

In speaking of the death of God, Hegel never loses his tone of gravity and pain.⁴ An allusion to the experienced conviction suffices him; there is nothing here of the psychological, the literary. He is brief; he states a fact and draws his conclusions. He is pinpointing a moment within the dialectical evolution: one moment only, but "a moment at the highest ideological level". Christianity and truth thus remain united. One form of Christianity is dead, but Christianity, being "Spirit", will remain.

From Hegel, the idea of the death of God passed in a direct line to Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). While studying in Berlin, between October 1821 and May 1823, Heine attended some of Hegel's lectures, became acquainted with his work and discussed it with various friends,⁵ among whom was Edward Gans (1798-1839), the first editor of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. Heine was a Jew; acutely aware of the problem set him by his

¹ HEGEL, *Wissen und Glaube*, 1802, i, p. 433.

² PASCAL, *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, No. 271; ed. Strowski, No. 256.

³ Cf. K. LÖWYTH, *Nietzsches Philosophie der Ewigen Wiederkehr*, p. 39.

⁴ HEGEL, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Glockner, vol. ii, pp. 571 and 595.

⁵ Cf. Letters; 1st April 1823; May 1823; 7th April 1823; 30th September 1823; 28th November 1823; 9th January 1824; 19th March 1824.

religion and the social situation that it produced, he had embraced Protestantism in order to obtain the baptismal certificate which a Jew had to have if he was to hold public office, and thus had his own painful experience of a religion in disintegration. He possessed an extraordinary gift for sarcasm and irony, and from this Berlin period onwards he made frequent use of it.

On 1st April 1823 he wrote to Wohlwill that the Jews no longer had "the strength to grow a beard, or to fast, or to be tolerant out of hatred: hence the motive of our reform". But he immediately began his criticism of Christianity, whose "decline becomes every day clearer. This putrified idea has been preserved long enough. There are whole dirty broods of ideas. . . . If one of these bug-ideas is crushed, it leaves behind it a stink which can be smelt for thousands of years. Ch . . . is one such idea. He was already crushed eighteen centuries ago, and he still makes the whole air reek for us poor Jews".

From the letter of 18th June 1823 onwards, irreverent terms appear in his correspondence, directed not only against Christianity but against God. God is for him "the old fellow", "the old Baron of Sinai and the Monarch of Judea", an "old gentleman" who, he fears, has "lost his head". On 26th June 1823, speaking of "a delightful young girl", he cannot "hold it against God the father for having also found pleasure in a Jewess". After reading Goethe, he declares himself "no longer a blind pagan, but a pagan seer" (to L. Robert, 27th November 1823). A few weeks later he writes: "May my right hand wither if ever I forget thee, Jerusalem. These are approximately the words of the Psalmist; they are also always mine" (to Moser, 9th January 1824); and again: "I am not as atheistic as they say" (to Moser, 21st January 1824).

These are signs of the times which we understand better through the extraordinary speech which Jean Paul Richter puts into the mouth of "the dead Christ [who announces] from on high that there is no God".¹ Atheism is, then, a phenomenon of the day, always on the increase, strange both in its violence and in its novelty.

These are also the marks of the man who possessed that synthetic genius which links extremes; that master of the striking

¹ It was from this speech that Gérard de Nerval took the device; "Dieu est mort, Le ciel est vide . . . Pleurez! enfants, vous n'avez plus de père!" which he placed at the

phrase, that "advanced thinker" who loved to shock—a man sick and hypersensitive, a born exhibitionist who never missed the opportunity of scoring a literary hit.

It was in 1834 that Heine, taking up once more the sinister slogan of the death of God, broadcast it in the *Revue des deux Mondes*. He spoke of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as "the sword which killed the God of the deists in Germany". He called Kant "that great destroyer in the realm of thought", comparing this "demolition of the old dogmatism" with "the storming of the Bastille", describing it as a "revolution", an act which "outstrips in terrorism those of Maximilien Robespierre". He found in Kant the executioner an "inexorable, trenchant, comfortless honesty, devoid of poetry, and entirely trivial". "Had the burghers of Königsberg realised the full implications of his thought, they would have felt before this man a shuddering far more horrible than that aroused by an executioner who only kills men". But "this mournful news will perhaps need a few more centuries to spread right through the world—though we ourselves have been mourning for a long time. *De profundis*".¹

The difference between Hegel and Heine is obvious. The idea is the same, but the melancholy of Hegel has become in Heine a destructive irony.

In the following year (1835) there appeared the *Life of Jesus*, by David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74). It aroused general indignation. Like Heine, Strauss was a pupil of Hegel; he saw nothing in the Gospel but a myth, the collective expression of the beliefs of a certain group in a certain temporal context.

In 1841 there followed *The Essence of Christianity*, by Ludwig Feuerbach, another of Hegel's pupils, who explained God as a

head of his poem: "Le Christ aux Oliviers". The apostles are asleep and Christ addresses them:

" . . . Mes amis, savez-vous la nouvelle?
J'ai touché de mon front à la voûte éternelle;
Je suis sanglant, brisé, souffrant pour bien des jours!
Frères, je vous trompais: Abîme! abîme! abîme!
Le dieu manque à l'autel où je suis la victime . . .
Dieu n'est pas! Dieu n'est plus! . . ."

We are here quite intentionally ignoring atheistic trends outside Germany, and their influences on each other. The phenomenon was European: Voltaire's flirtation with God, the work of the Encyclopaedists, Diderot's superb Misanthrope, the formula of decomposition which Baudelaire applied to God, Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Lautréamont—these are some of the names on the road of atheism in France.

¹ HEINE, "L'Allemagne depuis Luther", *Revue des deux Mondes* (15th December 1834).

transposition of human predicates. The year 1844 saw the entry of Karl Marx into the arena. Yet another disciple of Hegel, he also claimed affinity with Feuerbach. With his advent, the message of atheism reached the masses, and this just at the time of Germany's industrialisation, of the concentration of immense urban populations, especially in the industrial centres. The desperately poor learnt at one and the same time that "man is the supreme being for man" and that religion is "the opium of the people".

One generation later, Nietzsche (1844-1900) was able to summarise the various German atheisms and thus to wind up the epoch of Christian civilisation in the West. These proclamations of the death of God, made between the days of Hegel and Nietzsche, bring the Middle Ages definitely to an end.

Nietzsche opens his doctrine of the death of God in a passage of *The Joyful Wisdom*:

"Buddha having died," he writes, "his shadow was shown in a cave for centuries after—a vast and terrifying shadow. God is dead; but men are such that there will yet be caves, for millions of years, where his shadow will be shown. . . . And we . . . we still have to conquer his shadow."¹

Heine had already insisted on the slowness of men to understand such an event. Nietzsche stresses it in the first passage where he speaks of the death of God. He returns to this idea in the article which became so famous—"The Madman".

"Where is God?" he cried. 'I'll tell you! We have killed him—you and I! We are all his murderers! But how did we do this? How could we drink the ocean? Who gave us the sponge with which we wiped out the whole horizon? What have we done in detaching this earth from its sun? Where is it going now? Where are we going? Far from all the suns? Are we not at this moment falling endlessly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in every direction at once? Is there still an upwards and downwards? Are we not wandering through an infinite void? Do we not feel the breath of the vacant immensity? Is it not colder and the night ever darker? Do we not

¹ NIETZSCHE, *The Joyful Wisdom*, No. 108.

have to light lanterns at full noon? Can't you already hear the sound of the gravediggers who are burying God? Can't you smell the odour of the corruption of God?—for Gods also rot! God is dead! God will remain dead! And we killed him! How shall we console ourselves, we, the murderers among all murderers? All that there was of sacredness and power in the world has bled beneath our knives—who shall wash the smear of this blood from us? With what water shall we be purified? What expiatory feasts and sacred games must we invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Shall we not have to become Gods ourselves, even if only to appear worthy of having done it? Never was there so great a deed—and all those who shall be born after us will, by this deed, belong to a nobler history than all the history of the past!’

“Then the madman was silent and looked again at his listeners: they too were silent and looked at him uneasily. At last he threw his lantern to the ground; it shattered into fragments and went out. ‘I come too early,’ he said; ‘time is not yet fulfilled. This formidable event is still on the way, it is coming, it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder need time, the light of the stars needs time, deeds need time, even after they have been committed, to be heard and seen. This deed is more distant from you than the furthest of constellations—and yet you have committed it!’ It is still said that the madman entered several churches that day and sang his *Requiem aeternam Deo*.”¹

The killer of God, the knife or sword, the greatness of the action, the impression of uneasiness after this new deed, the incomprehension of the crowd, the *De Profundis* and the *Requiem aeternam Deo*—these elements are all too familiar for us not to conclude that Nietzsche's thoughts and expressions were inspired by Heine. If Nietzsche exaggerates here and there, he keeps the essentials, and draws new implications from them. The consequences of the death of God are far more important for Nietzsche than for Heine.

The death of God: for Nietzsche the phrase means a declaration and a willing, an act: the declaration that a local, national, temporal belief in a God has died out. It is the statement of a well-known sociological phenomenon, as for instance when one

¹ NIETZSCHE, *ibid.*, no. 215.

speaks of the disappearance of belief in the gods of Greece, Rome or Germany. Its particular significance lies in the fact that Christianity has no absolute character for Nietzsche, since he says specifically that "the Christian God is dead".¹

One of the reasons for God's death is that He made Himself ridiculous by "that most impious word": "There is only one God! Thou shalt have no other God but me."² Christianity had to disappear, because it contradicted the truth of polytheism.

But "when the gods die, they die diverse deaths".³ God has also "died of his pity for men"⁴—a well-known theme in Nietzschean philosophy—and "he choked with theology".⁵ The crumbling of the Christian religion is thus due in the second place to false religious concepts and to theology!

The third cause is historical, psychological and aesthetic. Time and our development have made God "entirely superfluous".⁶ He is too oriental for us Europeans: too much of a judge to be loved; cruel, jealous—in short, as Feuerbach had already taught, "a human creation and a human folly, like all gods".⁷ Thanks to Christianity itself, our taste and psychological sense have grown too subtle to tolerate such a God any longer. Modern man has become too much aware of the faults of this God. And so He had to die.

"... This amateur potter marred too many of his creations. But to take vengeance on his vessels and on his creatures because they did not turn out well—that was a sin *against good taste*."

"In the matter of piety, too, there is a question of taste; and it is this good taste which finally said: 'Enough of such a God! It is better to have no God, to carve out one's own destiny, it is better to be mad, better to be gods ourselves'.⁸

The idea of death finally means a *willing*!⁹ This is where the originality of Nietzsche's atheism stands out. In the history of

¹ NIETZSCHE, *Werke*, vol. xiii, p. 316.

² NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, bk. iii, ch. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, bk. iv, ch. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. ii, ch. 3, and bk. iv, ch. 6.

⁵ NIETZSCHE, *Werke*, vol. xii, p. 72, ed. Kröner, Leipzig.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. x, p. 491.

⁷ NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, bk. i, ch. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, bk. iv, chap. 6.

⁹ Cf. H. DE LUBAC, *Le drame de l'humanisme athée*, Spes (Paris, 1944), the best account there is of the problems of modern atheism. English trans. *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1949).

German thought up to 1881-2, Nietzsche is the first and the only one to *will* that God should die. There is a "murderer of God" in his work.¹ The value, and hence the love, of life contradict faith in God. "The notion of God" has been until now "the greatest objection to existence" (*Dasein*),² and more surely still, "The God of the Cross is a malediction on life".³ So, Nietzsche revolts; he does not admit the presence of God, wants belief in Him to cease, wills His death.

At this point in Nietzsche's work, we must ask with reference to the murder and the murderer, how is it done, and by whom? And it must be stated that here the Promethean, destructive, deicidal force suddenly collapses. The murderer is not Nietzsche, nor even the symbol of his thought, Zarathustra, but another. Another? A "something". Zarathustra, going along a valley which shepherds call "the death of serpents":

"... saw something sitting by the wayside, something which looked like a man but hardly had human form, a being unnameable. And suddenly Zarathustra was seized with great shame for having seen such a thing; blushing to the roots of his white hair, he turned away his eyes and stepped away from this evil path. But then the dreary solitude spoke; from the ground arose a choking and a death-rattle, like the water that gurgles and rattles at night in choked pipes; at last it was a human voice and human words which formed themselves thus:

"Zarathustra, Zarathustra, guess my riddle. Speak, speak: what is the *revenge against the Witness*?"

"Step back, I pray you, the ice is slippery. Take care that your pride does not break its leg.

"You think yourself wise, proud Zarathustra. Then guess this riddle, you who can crack the hardest nuts. Solve the enigma that I am. Tell me, who am I?"

"But when Zarathustra heard these words, what do you think occurred in his soul? Pity overcame him and he fell like a log, like an oak which has held out against many woodcutters and which falls suddenly, heavily, to the terror even of

¹ NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, bk. iv, ch. 7.

² NIETZSCHE, *Werke*, vol. viii, p. 101.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. xvi, p. 392.

those who wanted to cut it down. But at once he rose and his features hardened.

"‘I know you,’ he said in a voice of brass, ‘you are *the murderer of God*. Let me pass.

"‘You could not bear that he should see you, that he should have you constantly in his gaze and pierce you through, oh, most hideous of men. You took vengeance on that witness.’

"Having thus spoken, Zarathustra went on his way, but the unnameable being seized him by the tail of his coat and began his formless sounds again as he hunted for words. ‘Stay!’ he said at last. . . .

"‘I know you have guessed what a murderer of God must feel. Stay! Sit down beside me, you will lose nothing . . .’

Zarathustra remains, and the unnameable being continues:

"‘Whether it comes from a god or from men, pity offends modesty. And the refusal of all help may be more noble than an over-officious virtue.

"‘Now that which little people today call virtue is pity—there is no respect for great misfortune, great hideousness, great failure . . .

"‘For too long the humble have been thought to be in the right, and it has ended by their being given power. Now they teach: only what the humble think good is good.

"‘And truth, in our era, is what that preacher said who came from among them—that strange saint, that mouthpiece of the humble, who said of himself: I am Truth.

"‘It is this presumptuous one who has for so long puffed up little people with pride, for his error was hardly a trivial one when he said: I am Truth.

"‘Was ever a presumptuous man answered more courteously? Yet you, O Zarathustra, passed him by without stopping, and said: No, no, no, a threefold No!

"‘You proclaimed his error, you were the first to point out the danger of pity—not for all the world or for anyone, but for yourself and those of your race.

"‘You feel shame at being the witness of great suffering. And in truth when you say: ‘Pity covers us with a heavy cloud; beware, O men!’: when you teach that all creatures

are hard, that all great love triumphs over its own pity—O Zarathustra, I feel you are well versed in the signs of the times.

“‘But you yourself, beware of your own pity. For a crowd of people have set out to find you—all the sufferers, the doubters, the desperate, those beset by danger of drowning or freezing to death.

“‘Beware also of me. You have guessed the best and the worst of that enigma which I am. You have guessed who I am and what I do. I know the axe which can fell you.

“‘But he—he had to die. With his eyes which saw *all*, he could see to the very nethermost recesses of man; his whole shame and his hidden ugliness.

“‘His pity had no modesty; he found his way into the filthiest corners, that inquisitive, indiscreet maniac of pity; he had to die.

“‘He was always looking at me; I had to take vengeance on that witness—or cease to live.

“‘The god who saw all, and *even man*, he had to die.

“‘Man cannot suffer such a witness to live.’

“‘Thus spoke the most hideous of men. But Zarathustra rose to go on his way; for he felt frozen to the marrow . . .”¹

Here, then, is the murderer and here are the motives for his murder.

Once again, it is not Zarathustra who becomes a murderer. He does not explain the reasons. But in presenting the most hideous of men as the murderer of God, he has shown that one must indeed be hideous to take such a deed upon oneself. And yet he has his part in this murder. It was he who taught the principles from which the murderer drew his conclusion. But, seen more closely, are not these principles really a protest against a certain form of religious practice which lowers both God and His creatures and deprives God of His unutterable majesty and sanctity? There are many texts which can lead us to interpret Nietzsche’s thought in this way. Much of his indignation is derived from a very high conception of God and man and from a very authentic religious feeling. His action against the existence of God is therefore not the

¹ NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, bk. iv, ch. 7.

satanic action which desires that what is great, what is greatest of all, should be destroyed.¹

The fragment on "the madman" had already shown Nietzsche's clarity of thought with regard to what awaits the world and humanity after "the disappearance of faith in the Christian God". He returns to the same theme several times, especially in the fifth book of *The Joyful Wisdom*. He foresaw what was to come, and yet he wanted it to happen because only then would man be free for a new life.

"The greatest of recent events—the 'death of God': in other words the fact that the faith in the Christian God has been stripped of its plausibility—is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe. Few people, it is true, are clear-sighted enough or sufficiently on their guard to perceive such a spectacle; at most it seems to them that a Sun has just set, that an ancient and profound consciousness has become a doubt: our old world seems every day more fatally vespereal, more suspicious, more alien, more out of date. But in a general way it may be said that the event is much too great, too distant, too far outside the conceptions of the crowd for the news—I say simply, the news—to be considered as having reached the minds of the people; even less for one to be entitled to think that most people realise precisely what has happened and what will fall to pieces now that this faith has been undermined; this faith which was the base, the support, the sole source of so many things—the whole scheme of European ethics, among other details.

"We must henceforth expect a long series, a long profusion of demolitions, destructions, ruins and commotions: who could guess enough of them today to teach such a vast logical system, to become the prophet of such immense terrors, such darkness, such an eclipse of the sun as has never yet been known on earth? . . . We ourselves, readers of riddles, born sooth-sayers, who wait as it were on the mountain-tops, somewhere between yesterday and tomorrow and contradictorily harnessed between the two, we the premature firstborn of the

¹ This is the chief point in the detailed interpretation of Nietzschean atheism. Here also Nietzschean thought should meet "the postulational atheism" as defined by Max Scheler in *Mensch und Geschichte* (Zurich, 1929), p. 55.

century to come, who should already have perceived the shadows that will soon envelop Europe, why do we await the rise of this black tide without any real interest, even without fear or anxiety for ourselves? Is it because we are still too much dominated by the influence of the first consequences of this event? For these first consequences contrary to what one would expect, have for us nothing dark or oppressive: no, they appear as a new kind of light, difficult to describe, a new kind of happiness, an alleviation, a way of serenity, of encouragement and of dawn . . . Thus we philosophers, 'free spirits', on learning that 'the ancient God is dead', feel as if illumined by a new dawn; our hearts overflow with gratitude, with astonishment, with expectation and hope; . . . even if the horizon is not clear, it is at last free; our vessels can at last sail and face all danger; all possible adventures are again allowed to the pioneers of knowledge; the sea, our sea, once again stretches before us in all its vast expanse; indeed, perhaps there never was before such an 'open' sea."¹

Nietzsche foresaw the man who would inhabit the world after the rejection of Christian ethics; he saw him so well that he could find no other name for him but "the last man . . . Who is he?"

"Here you are, I will show you the Last Man.

"What is it to love? What is it to create? What is it to desire? What is a star?' Thus will the Last Man speak, blinking.

"Earth will then have become very small; over it will hop the Last Man, who diminishes everything. His breed is as indestructible as that of the flea; the Last Man is the man who will live longest.

"We have invented happiness,' the Last Man will say, blinking.

"They will have abandoned the regions where life is hard; for one needs warmth. They will still love their neighbours and rub themselves against them, for warmth is necessary.

"Sickness and distrust will seem as sins to them; one only needs to look where one is going! A man is mad if he still trips over stones or over men!

¹ NIETZSCHE, *The Joyful Wisdom*, §343.

"A little poison now and again; it gives pleasant dreams. And a lot of poison at the end, to have a pleasant death.

"They will still work, for work is diverting. But they will take care that this diversion never becomes tiring.

"No one will become either rich or poor; it is too painful. Who then will still want to govern? Who will want to obey? Both are too painful.

"No shepherd, and a single flock! All will want the same, all will be equal; anyone who feels differently will voluntarily enter the lunatic asylum.

"'In the old days the whole world was mad,' the cleverer ones will say, blinking.

"They will be clever, they will know everything that happened in the old days; they will thus have enough to make endless fun of. They will still quarrel, but they will make it up quickly for fear of getting indigestion.

"They will have their little pleasure for the day, and their little pleasure for the night; but they will revere health.

"'We have invented happiness,' the Last Man will say, blinking."¹

This "man" will belong to the era to which Nietzsche gave the name of "nihilism". This last man will be legion. But no danger, no indignation, no disgust made Nietzsche draw back. He was certain that this nihilism was an unavoidable necessity after Christianity had come to an end, that it would last a long time but a limited time; and he longed for it ardently, for on the horizon was shining the promise of a new era, a new man.

III. HORROR VACUI

Rationalism opposed to faith was the characteristic feature of the first part of the eighteenth century. The second was marked by the violent opposition of the irrationalist *Sturm und Drang* to the excesses of reason. In the spiritual void which was thus hollowed out there entered first classicism, and then romanticism.

Both movements were able to lessen the havoc caused by reasoning reason, but they could not and would not revive the Christian spirit, and the nineteenth century began quite naturally

¹ NIETZSCHE, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Prologue, ch. 5.

with the "liquidation" of Christianity. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards the masses seized on what had at first been the concern of only a few minds. The opposition between reason and religion or between reason and life gave way, after Hegel's death, to the opposition between the positive, the historical, and the natural sciences. Metaphysics having been dethroned, the various sciences were regarded as suitable successors. Physics and biology imposed their findings and it was thought that they could resolve the problems which until then had belonged to the realm of metaphysics. It is difficult to over-estimate the damage caused by such books as Ernest Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe* (1899). Historicism was hardly less destructive than biologism, but it remained the food of the few, whereas biologism was addressed to the masses.

After Nietzsche, and for the most part under his influence, the scientific materialism of the preceding period lost ground and gradually gave way to an a-Christian if not anti-Christian spiritualism. Two famous poets of the first third of the century—Stefan George and Rainer Maria Rilke—are proof enough of this. They were very different; both of Catholic origin but long lapsed from the faith, they carried on the work of transforming transcendental values into immanent values. What they tried to achieve through the spirit and the will, others, for example Gerhart Hauptmann, tried to achieve on the naturalistic level and by appealing to social sentiment.

For the first time for very many years, a metaphysical revival took place towards the end of the nineteenth century. From the first years of this century onwards it is possible to speak of man's return to the living God. In this connection the name of F. W. Foerster, from the period of the first World War, is one of the first that come to mind. The best philosophical thinkers were abandoning solipsism and sterile criticism, and discovering essence, being, values, the spirit and the concrete, the person and the community. The period after 1918 was one of the richest in the history of German thought. F. W. Foerster worked his way through to acknowledging the divinity of Christ. Max Scheler founded a new philosophy of religion by his analysis of the nature of the religious act: von Hildebrand, Peter Wust, Rosenmöller, Fr. Przywara, Haecker, were all influenced by him to a greater or lesser extent. Fr. Lippert, Karl Adam, Karl Eschweiler before

his errors: here too were brilliant minds caught up in the revival of the enquiry into the essence of Catholicism. Meanwhile Romano Guardini was proclaiming the rebirth of the Church in the souls of men and helping the younger generation to recover the sense of responsibility towards God and conscience. The magnificent liturgical movement inaugurated by Dom Ildefons Herwegen was bringing to light treasures which had once seemed lost for ever. One would have to list a long catalogue of poets, artists and reviews if one wanted to give some idea of the spiritual life into which Catholicism had blossomed. And the same holds true of Protestantism. Karl Barth, Eric Peterson before his conversion, Piper, Gogarten, Dehn, Rudolf Otto were among the theologians who gave a new direction to the sacred science of the Lutheran Reformed Church. Beyond the boundaries of the two Churches there arose a realistic, concrete philosophy, wide open to life, a philosophy which gave birth to figures still prominent today, such as Nicolai Hartmann, Jaspers, Litt and many others.

It was, of course, inevitable, after so long a period of the misconception of religious values, that only a minority should be affected by this revival. The vast tide of indifference flowed alongside it, sweeping into its current the overwhelming majority of the middle classes and the proletariat—the very masses who were later to find a complete answer to the problem of life in National Socialism. A multiplicity of sects and of philosophical systems had been offered to them. There was nothing which could unite them finally or satisfy their overpowering metaphysical needs. A feeling of emptiness which it was beyond their strength to bear laid them open to the seduction of movements which questioned everything and which promised a new age, a completed man. A whole literature grew up which expressed hatred of the intellect. The rationalist scaffolding crumbled under the blows of men who had reverted to barbarism. Goering publicly thanked Hitler for having "given them a new faith". The leader of the millions of men organised into the Workers' Front pointed to the members of the S.A. as the missionaries of the modern age. The author of *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* admitted that, for some time to come, Goethe could not be a model for the New Germany, for if the nation was ever again to find cohesion it would have to submit to a "type of man" Goethe would not have accepted. A writer

with some reputation made one of his characters say: "Whenever I hear culture mentioned I pull the trigger of my revolver."

One could draw up an almost endless list of such allusions,¹ but what we have already quoted is enough to show us that man was, for the most part, off his course, in the strongest sense of the term.

Nicolai Hartmann wrote in one of his works: "We have no direct criteria of truth . . . all verification has to face the somewhat uneasy confrontation with the object."² It is a test which no thinker can refuse. But is it a process for everybody? And what reality, what object can help us to verify the assertions on man and on God, or at least the assertions on man and his salvation? Whither is a nation leading when its thinkers penetrate further and further into a world which is closed to the great mass of mankind, a world which has no contact with everyday anxieties? Will recent history at least serve to verify the most elementary notions of what is and what should be?

IV. SATANIC OR DEMONIAC?

The existence and nature of Satan are part of revelation. He has too often been disregarded, and this has led to his becoming fused with various allegories, as for instance those of Germanic mythology, or of mediaeval legend, or of the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf. It may even be said that the profanation of Revelation began when European literature started to make capital out of the name and figure of Satan. Thus it is absolutely necessary for anyone who wishes to respect the sacred character of Revelation to leave Satan his own name and the nature attributed to him by the Gospel. For this reason, and for reasons of method, we prefer, like certain other authors,³ to use the expression "demoniac", which is the term employed by contemporary philosophy. Disobedience, revolt, hatred of supreme values—the Holy of Holies—such are the essential characteristics of the demoniacal, at the

¹ See especially, WALDEMAR GURIAN, *Der Kampf um die Kirche im Dritten Reich* (Lucerne, 1936); R. d'HARCOURT, *Catholiques d'Allemagne* (Paris, Plon, 1938); EDM. VERMEIL, *Hitler et le Christianisme* (Paris, Gallimard, 1939).

² NICOLAI HARTMANN, "Der Philosophische Gedanke und seine Geschichte". *Abh. der Berliner Ak. der Wiss.*, 1936, p. 4.

³ Cf. PAUL TILLICH, *Das Dämonische. Ein Beitrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte* (Tübingen. Mohr, 1926).

summit of which stands Satan, a power stronger than man or nature.

It is this demoniacal force which seems to be at work in the logical chain of atheistic ideas in modern German philosophy, and in the persistence with which this series of ideas has infiltrated from generation to generation, first emptying Revelation of its supernatural character, then minimising the notion of God and magnifying that of the individual, to end up by respecting only that which seemed useful to the nation. There is a clear causal relationship between these two centuries of thought and the intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual devastation which will for a long time remain before our eyes.

With implacable logic evil has invaded both man and history, using the spirit of the one to direct the course of the other. Rationalism and vitalism seem to be the favourite haunts of the demoniac, and Holy Writ confirms this hypothesis when it presents the devil as offering "the knowledge of good and evil" to man, and when St. John speaks of "the pride of life". Rationalism and vitalism are the two forces which have modelled modern German thought, and given it its peculiar brilliance. They are, above all others, the instruments of the demoniacal.

Everything warns us, however, that we must speak of the demoniacal, as of Satan, with extreme prudence and sobriety. Whoever speaks of the devil also implies grace and sin. It is the salvation of man which is at stake. This is the perspective of theology and metaphysics and not of the positive sciences as such. A political historian, for example, who spoke with too much assurance of this concealed abyss would seem to be overstepping the limits of his scientific task. But he would certainly not be fulfilling his task if he did not draw our attention to destructive forces superior to man, which work through him but not always as he wishes.

In the light of Christ the Saviour, the Judge of Satan, the Christian, when confronting the philosophical current of atheism, will conclude the presence of objectively demoniac thought. The aged Goethe, echoing St. Augustine over the centuries, noted in the margin of his *Divan*:

"The real theme, the sole and fundamental theme of the history of the world and of man, the theme to which all others

are subordinate, remains the conflict between belief and unbelief."

As for judging the subjective intention of the thinker, how could one dare to do so after the words of Christ:

"The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God a service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."¹

PAULUS LENZ-MÉDOC

¹ John xvi. 2-3.

SATAN IN OUR DAY

THESE vehement pages were written by our friend Dom Aloïs Mager, O.S.B., Dean of the Faculty of Theology in Salzburg, just before his sudden death from overwork on 26th December 1946, at the age of sixty-three. This faithful contributor to *Etudes Carmélitaines* was responsible—after the V.R.F. Agostino Gemelli, President of the Pontifical Academy of Science—for the creation of our International Congresses of Religious Psychology. In 1939 he wrote, under an assumed name, the *Custos quid de nocte?* which completes *Le Risque Chrétien*. Dom Mager suffered intensely over the opposition of National Socialism to the Catholic impetus in his own country. From his window he used to utter the words of exorcism over the Obersalzberg. Midway through the Hitlerian tragedy I went with him on a pilgrimage to the holy woman who, a hundred and twenty-five years ago, told of a vision which, she said, would have had the power to kill her when she tried to bring it back before her eyes: "In the midst of hell was a chasm of darkness: Lucifer was thrown into it loaded with chains, and black vapours poured around him. All this took place according to certain divine commands. I learnt that Lucifer was to be unleashed for a time—fifty or sixty years before the year 2000 after Christ, if I am not mistaken." (*Es geschach Alles dieses nach bestimmten Gesetzen, ich hörte dass Luzifer, wo ich nicht irre, 50 oder 60 Jahre vor dem Jahre 2000 nach Christus wieder aufeine Zeitlang solle freigelassen werden*).¹

BRUNO DE J.-M.

THE PERIOD in which we are living differs from the preceding one in that it is proving experimentally what before was only apprehended theoretically. It is man himself who is the theme of the present spiritual evolution. We must therefore understand man in

¹ *Das bittere Leiden unsers Herrn Jesu Christi nach den Betrachtungen der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich* (9th February 1824) (Salzbach, 1833), p. 319.

himself, independently of the supernatural world. Until now man has understood himself only as a being of consciousness and knowing, as a "res cogitans". Today he descends into the lowest strata of instinct and appetitive power, down to the very roots of human existence, to the two fundamental forces which preserve the individual and the species.

It is this double instinct of the preservation of the individual and the species which more than any other was seriously damaged by the consequences of original sin. If, in the course of some profoundly felt experience, man comes down to the last depths of original corruption, he finds himself in immediate contact with the satanic, and if he is not able to conquer it, he is bound to succumb. It is precisely this fact which characterises the events which have occurred and are still occurring in our day. Just as true mysticism consists in resistance to and victory over the underworld of demons for the sake of salvation, so, too, there is a satanic mysticism which also penetrates into this underworld, not to vanquish it, but to legitimise it, deify it and assume the role of *medium* for it.

To prove the truth of this I shall call two witnesses: modern literature and National Socialism.

In literature, notably the literature of the novel, it is pre-eminently the French and Russian writers who confront us with a new inner reality: demonism. It is true that Nietzsche before them had uncovered the satanic depths: nevertheless it was the men of letters, the masters of living psychology, whose shrewd prevision foretold what has become an immediate reality to the world of today. No one has revealed the human soul more penetratingly than the French and the Russians, and in making any analysis of their work we are fully entitled to speak of demonism. With a touch of extraordinary sensitivity, they were able to reach those extremities where the influence of Satan seeps through. They smelt out the breath of the demonic and realised what a compelling motive power it might be: they then attempted to translate this demonism into literary form, that the general public might focus its attention on the reality which had just been brought to light. One may here recall the novels of Bernanos: *Sous le Soleil de Satan* and *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*.

Du Bos, in his *Dialogue avec André Gide* (Paris, 1929), traced the lines of "demonism" in Gide and Nietzsche: nor did he forget

Dostoievski, whose *Letters from the Underworld* shows demonism in its naked form. Dostoievski's expositions are so realistic that Du Bos believes that he was in direct co-operation with Satan. And Karl Pfleger justly observes: "The demonic figures produced by Dostoievski—Raskolnikov, Svidrigailov, Kirlov, Verchovenski, Ivan, Dmitri, Smerdiakov and the father of the Karamazov brothers—are not mere creatures of the imagination: they are born of what he himself had experienced inwardly." No writer before Dostoievski has ever shown such realism in his portrayal of demonism in the infra-human, the supra-human and the infra-supra-human. These demons with human faces think unreally. They are pure visionaries. Their analytical reason or their fleshly voluptuousness loses all contact with "living life". At times they seem powerful and of great weight, but they are so only in destruction. Whatever they do, their work ends only in destruction, because it comes forth from men who are already destroyed to the depth of their souls (Karl Pfleger, *Die Geister, die um Christus ringen*, pp. 208-21). Pfleger has a strong inkling, though he is not consciously aware, of the origins of demonism in Dostoievski when he writes:

"The lower regions are nothing else than the anthropological secret of liberty and trial in liberty. They are not in themselves satanic, but demons emerge from them. Man who is from birth destined to liberty becomes a demon if he abuses liberty" (pp. 208-9).

In theological language we would say: the consequences of original sin are not in themselves demonic: they are human: but they are points of entry for demons. These doors are set open when man, consciously and experimentally, lets himself be guided by the impulse of the triple result of original sin in his thought, his will and his action. This is what makes man a slave; this is what fetters him in the use of his liberty. It is possible for him to become and to remain free from the slavery of triple concupiscence; but it is also possible for him not to become and not to remain free of this slavery. The man who chooses the second possibility gives himself up to the action of Satan and himself becomes, gradually, a demon.

Demonism, which certain men of letters have observed and experimented with, without consciously submitting to it, remains

an individual affair, and, as it were, a literary phenomenon. But in National Socialism it seized hold of a whole society with the deliberate intention of swallowing up, first the nation, and finally the whole world. Demonism in this form becomes a general phenomenon. Nor is this all. It becomes, both for the individual and for society, a form of life and activity: on it is to be based a new organisation of the world and humanity. We have seen the beginning of this: indeed for a long time it seemed as if nothing could stop the triumphal march of what appeared to be a gigantic movement.

It is, however, fairly obvious that the motive force of National Socialism proceeds directly from the triple consequences of original sin. It was the ideal of National Socialism to fulfil positively, as the highest values of human culture, the appetites of the threefold concupiscence of original sin; indeed, this was the most exalted ideal of National Socialism—the aim above all others. The true and original nobility of the human race was to be found in its fulfilment. Anyone who opposed this ideal was sinning against the nation and the entire human race; and those who did so had simply to be exterminated. Never throughout history have the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and pride of life been presented so cleverly and with such conviction, as being the very opposite of their true essence. For the National Socialists all happiness, all salvation both private and public, consisted solely and exclusively in the goods of this world. If it was felt necessary to conquer more *lebensraum*, and thus to gain more of this world's goods, every means of doing so was not only permitted but encouraged: in fact, regarded as an absolutely binding duty. The right to act thus was based on the very existence of the race. *This is the apotheosis of the concupiscence of the eyes.* Corrupted as it is by original sin, that instinct which passionately demands to be satisfied at all costs—the instinct of preservation, both of the individual and of the species—was declared to be the highest norm of morality. A radical sexual amorality was extolled in the schools, in the Hitler Youth camps, in the “Ordensburg” and in the S. S. barracks. *This is the apotheosis of the concupiscence of the flesh.* Again, nothing was so despicable, so hateful, even, to National Socialism as Christian humanity. It was regarded as the degradation of the self for mankind, a detestable weakness, the cause of all failures. Just as pride of spirit is established as the

highest ideal of education for the individual, so the unity and the union of the nation were to be shown in the consciousness of its superior qualities, entitling it to regard itself as a race of the élite, *Herrenvolk*, having by its very existence the right and the duty to appoint itself the ruler and governor of the whole world. *This is the apotheosis of the pride of life.*

We have already said that Satan made use of a medium to overthrow all the norms of law and morals which, both from nature and tradition, had been generally recognised right down to our day, in spite of the general process of de-Christianisation. This medium was Adolf Hitler. There is no definition more concise, more precise, or better adapted to the nature of Hitler than this—the medium of Satan. If it is characteristic of all mediums without exception that they should be morally entirely mediocre, both in character and personality, this is especially the case with the devil's medium. No one who is not deluded could see in Hitler a great personality either from the point of view of character or of morality. As General Jodl said of him at the Nuremberg trial: "He was a great man, but an infernal great man."¹

¹ We have not space to write of all the satanists and pseudo-satanists of our times. On 2nd December 1947 the British press announced the death of "Sir" Alastair Crowley, who once replied, when questioned about his identity: "Before Hitler was, I AM." Between 1920 and 1922 he founded two reviews in Berlin—*Gnosis* and *Luzifer*. Before he died at the age of seventy, he cursed his doctor for refusing to give him morphia because he distributed it to young people: "Since you are the cause of my dying without morphia you will die immediately after me." His prediction came true. The *Daily Express* of 2nd April 1948 reported that the funeral of the black magician, Crowley, had provoked the Brighton Municipal Council into registering a protest, in which Councillor J. C. Sherrott said that according to reports a whole ritual of black magic had been performed over the grave. And in fact Crowley's disciples had intoned diabolical incantations, Crowley's own "Hymn to Pan", Carducci's "Hymn to Satan" and the "Collects for the Gnostic Mass", composed by Crowley for his satanic temple in London.

The British press of 30th March 1948 also published obituary notices of the famous student of psychic problems, Harry Price, who was a specialist in demonology. In a report made under the aegis of London University, Price had declared that all over London there were men and women of good social standing and excellent education who worshipped the devil and regularly paid him homage. According to him, black magic, witchcraft and the invocation of the devil—three forms of supposedly "mediæval" superstition—are practised today in London on a scale and with a licence unknown in the Middle Ages. Price was the founder and permanent secretary of the Council for Psychical Investigation at London University.

Mr. A. Frank Duquesne draws our attention, among the contemporary manifestations of demonism, to the report of Professor Paul Kosok, of the University of Long Island. This report was published in the annals of the American Museum of Natural History, and dealt with an exploration made in Peru in 1946. The explorers there

Demonic power is always a power founded on delusion. In the imagination, which is the element where the devil works, gigantic dimensions pierce through; in the light of cold reflection they are reduced to a pathetic caricature.

It is as if Lucifer had once approached Hitler with the promise recorded by St. Luke:

“The devil led him into a high mountain, and shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And he said to him, To thee will I give all this power and the glory of them. For to me they are delivered: and to whom I will I give them. If thou therefore wilt adore before me, all shall be thine” (Luke iv. 5-7).

There is one infallible criterion by which we may distinguish all that is satanic—the criterion given us by Christ Himself. In a discussion with the Jews, He said to them:

“You are of your father the devil: the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father thereof” (John viii. 44).

These are the two signs which characterise the satanic: lying and murder.

Now lying and murder are the expression of the essence of National Socialism. Never before have they been committed so entirely for their own sake, with such cold premeditation, in so passionless a reflex, and with such complete fanaticism, as being the motive power of the life of a whole nation. If it is true that Pius XI called National Socialism the “mendacium incarnatum”, “the lie incarnate”, he could not have described it more exactly.

All the information in the press, all the announcements on the wireless breathed lies. All that National Socialism said, wrote and did was soaked in lies. The Party and State of National

discovered, over a stretch of five hundred square kilometres of sandy desert, a double series of drawings, some representing the signs of the Zodiac, others birds, plants, but, above all, polycephalous serpents. In the middle of the drawing of the Serpent was an immense pit containing the skeletons of men and animals, who had obviously been sacrificed. The whole is thought to be about 2,000 years old.

Socialism were built on a lie. In the last days before the election of the Reichpraesident posters were hung in many Catholic places inscribed with the words: "*Catholics, vote for the believing Catholic, Adolf Hitler.*" On 21st March 1933 Hitler announced: "The rights of our churches will remain unchanged. Nothing in their relation to the State will be altered. . . . The Government of the Reich sees in Christianity an impregnable basis for the work of reconstruction. It will cultivate and develop friendly relations with the Holy See." But to his accomplices he said: "I know the right way to treat these people, to get them to give way. They will bend or break, and if they are not fools they will bend. It is impossible to fight the Church; one would only make martyrs. It must be dried up. I, too, once had that fence around my soul, but I broke it, stick by stick." Then came the "drying-up", the formal elimination of the Church and of Christianity. It is unnecessary to recall the almost endless number of infamous measures taken by National Socialism against all that is Christian. The *Bayerische Lehrerzeitung* (1935, Nos. 36 and 37, p. 577) wrote triumphantly: "National Socialism is the highest form of religion. There has never been a higher." The following formula also dates from that time:

"In the centuries to come it will be said by those who look back: 'Christ was great, Adolf Hitler was greater'" (quoted in *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (1946), No. 35, p. 27 f.).¹

The lie on which National Socialism is built up is not merely human; it is essentially satanic. The human spirit is created for truth. In its narrowness and blindness it may make mistakes; it may even defend error fanatically. But lying is not error: it is more. It is the conscious reversal of truth. If the human spirit gives

¹ "They are not content with using religion to serve their aims of domination. They want to destroy it and replace it. *Salus ex Germanis*: the bearer of German light and salvation is called to replace Christ." These lines, and others equally moving, published by Robert d'Harcourt in "Résistants d'Allemagne" (*Etudes*, March 1948), are by THEODOR HÆCKER, whose "Aphorisms" we published in 1938. I shall always remember the visit which I paid to this great writer of Catholic Germany in the first days of November, 1937, while passing through Munich. He took me up to his little working cell at the top of the house. There he held both my hands and said, with tears flowing down his face: "We are slaves here." He insisted that I should come on 9th November to watch the Wagnerian procession of National Socialism. "You must see it, it is a new religion." I came and I saw that what he said was true. (Cf. *Etudes Carmelitaines*, April 1938; *L'Esprit et la Vie*, p. 125.) [Editor's note.]

itself voluntarily to lying, it is acting against its metaphysical nature. Only spiritual beings, which is what demons are, can live essentially in the perversity of the lie. Wherever lying has become the principle of life, the inner essence of intelligence, will and action, one may be sure that the forces of Satan are directly at work. This was the case in National Socialism. It was satanic in its inmost nature. Its route was marked with the heaped-up bodies of murdered men.

The judgment of history has already proclaimed an unalterable verdict: one man alone was responsible for this war, with its millions of men killed on the battle-fields and its millions of murdered men, women and children—one man, Adolf Hitler, and with him his closest initiates. The *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten* quotes the following horrifying statistics from a book entitled *Le Chaos Européen*: 16,000,000 were killed in battle, 29,600,000 wounded and crippled, 3,000,000 civilians killed by bombs. 5,500,000 gassed, burnt or murdered, 24,500,000 victims of bombardments, 15,000,000 evacuated and deported, 11,000,000 in concentration camps. And this is only a provisional balance sheet. There have been revolutions in the world's history which cost enormous numbers of human lives; but these blood-baths were caused by outbursts of human passion. In National Socialism, on the other hand, murder was a principle, a perfectly normal method used at every turn. The murder of "those who did not deserve to live" is proof enough of this.

Under National Socialism murder was the supreme manifestation of power. Individuals and people were duped and seduced by lies. Lies paved the way for the climb. Lies led to what seemed dazzling successes. If certain individuals came to see that the Nazis were deceiving both others and themselves, there at once began a reign of terror which did not suffer the slightest opposition. Lying and murder were the soul and the life of National Socialism. But both lying and murder stand for destruction and annihilation. Lying annihilates the life of the spirit, murder annihilates the life of the body. It is the true satanic aim—always to annihilate. Significantly enough, no words are reiterated so often or so regularly in the speeches of Hitler and of the leading Nazis as "destruction", "annihilation". But he who can only destroy and annihilate, destroys and annihilates himself. It is a factitious power, for it is really powerless. And that is

precisely the secret of the satanic. Because he is in himself powerless, the devil is a coward. To hide his powerlessness he puts up a smoke-screen of loud noises, boasting, grandiloquent gestures, factitious successes, insults and curses. I myself know from an absolutely authentic source, from eyewitnesses, how cowardly Hitler was in decisive moments. He left this world like a coward—if indeed he did leave it and is not now skulking like an utter coward in some remote corner of the earth. We all remember how he loved, by boasting and insult, to delude the world over his power. The man who has true power does not boast: does not insult or curse. Only the devil and his “medium” insult and curse: it is the infallible sign of demoniacal powerlessness. We find here the same contradiction: power which is impotence, impotence which pretends to be power.

Canon Neuhausler of Munich Cathedral, who spent several years in a concentration camp, published in 1946 a large book, *The Cross and the Swastika*, which described the struggle of National Socialism against the Catholic Church, and the Church's resistance (Munich, ed. *Katholische Kirche Bayerns*). In the first part, “Anti-Christ Unchained”, he summarises the essence and peculiar character of National Socialism in these words:

“There is a close connection between Satan and National Socialism.

“Satanic was the hatred of National Socialism against Christianity and all that was sacred.

“Satanic were the methods of warfare and the propaganda of National Socialism.

“Satanic were the brutality and cruelty of National Socialism.

“Satanic finally were the disintegration and the fall of National Socialism.”

To which we may add:

“Satanic were the murders and the murderers of National Socialism.”

The German people, like other nations, have no more urgent task than to extirpate National Socialism down to its very last root, and to make its return impossible. But would this mean

that the satanic element was thereby completely eliminated from our period? The spirit of National Socialism slips in everywhere, although it may present itself under different forms and in different degrees from those which it assumed in the days of Hitlerism. It is the spirit of conscious neo-paganism, which raises the three consequences of original sin to an ideal of life. Wherever this takes place, the doors are suddenly thrown open to the satanic. One power alone is capable of banishing the forces of the devil and driving them back into the pit—redemption through Christ as it operates in Christianity and the Church. Christianity and the Church have never ceased preaching to the world that salvation lies solely in the Cross—that is to say, in triumphing over the threefold consequences of original sin: the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. Only thus can the last domination of hell be finally annihilated. “Ecce crucem Domini, fugite partes adversae.”

† DOM ALOÏS MAGER, O.S.B.